

PREFACE

the time when the world might have been saved by co-operation of all the people who believed in collective security against the Government which did not, I had many discussions with members of other parties who agreed with me on this question and disagreed with the policy of their party chiefs.

I used to ask, "Why won't you come out and say so?" One told me the time was not ripe. Another felt a particular loyalty to the parliamentary leader of the little group to which he belonged. Another remembered with gratitude all the work put in for him by the members of the executive committee. "And lastly, of course, my dear friend, you appreciate I would lose my seat, and I rather like it. I have more influence in the House working quietly behind the scenes."

Yes indeed; more influence saying nothing inside the House than telling the truth as he believes it at the risk of being thrown out of it.

I used to leave these interviews in despair, wondering what could happen to our poor country if its best Members of Parliament,—for they were the best,—allowed such little personal considerations to stand between them and a frank statement of their real views. I am convinced that these,—perhaps sixty of them,—could have prevented this if they had spoken at any time in 1938. I believe they could have stopped it at any time up to the resignation of Litvinoff in May of 1939, or possibly even later. But they chose to hold their peace.

to be said for either course. But in the years 1932 to 1939 there were very special reasons for preferring the former. We lived under the ever more pressing danger of European War which has now become a reality. As long as there was any chance of avoiding this disaster it seemed to me better to advocate the policy of collective security through which it might have been avoided, and to couple this foreign policy with such domestic reforms as might have been made acceptable to a majority if they had been advocated by the united forces of progress. Unfortunately they were not so advocated, and now everything is quite different.

In the course of this war, the peoples of this country will have to pass through an emotional crisis so profound that no one can rule out any change of heart, however fundamental, as being beyond the bounds of possibility. But it is not merely a question of possibility. It is a question of necessity. As this war proceeds and as its early miseries reveal what its ultimate disasters may be, I believe the people of this country will be brought to realise that there will be no way of escape unless we are prepared to make a complete change in our hearts and to adopt those proposals which this change will make appropriate.

There is one other very trivial personal point I would like to refer to. This book is an elaboration of a short pamphlet I published last autumn entitled *What Now?* Many subjects barely hinted at in that pamphlet are here dealt with at length. There is a complete change of emphasis on many points, and some errors of the earlier pamphlet are corrected. Some of my friends have asked me whether it would not have been better never to have published *What Now?* at all, but to have waited until all my ideas were thoroughly worked out in my own mind. This may seem an attractive suggestion, but I would point out that the views expressed here have only taken their present shape as a result of the stream of constructive criticism that was poured in upon me both in public and in private by friends and by people unknown to me who had read *What Now?* This process could never have gone on if *What Now?* had never been printed.

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UNSER KAMPF

CHAPTER I

ACCEPT THE BIG IDEAS

THIS book is addressed to your mind and not to your emotions. It is a challenge to you to follow what your reason tells you is right no matter what your feelings are.

But in order that this book may be given a fair chance of succeeding, it is absolutely essential that you should agree in advance to think in really big terms.

At one point after another I shall argue that when great world-wide arguments say "Yes", it is no use opposing to them tiny little controversies which seem to say "No".

This is most important because there are many conclusions in this book which may be inconsistent with all manner of the readers' preconceived ideas. When anyone comes across such a conclusion he immediately hunts round for a "reason" to support his preconception. There is no idea so contrary to truth that there cannot be found one little plausible argument which seems to support it. Those who intend to follow up every one of these little arguments will be lost. And if I intended to follow up all the little arguments which I know will occur to one reader or another, I should be lost. There is only one rule,—a small-scale argument which says "No" does not answer a large-scale argument which says "Yes".

This conception of small-scale versus large-scale argument is vitally important for the whole of democracy. Democracy,—at any rate when it is expressed in the form

of millions of people voting at elections,—cannot hope to deal with a maze of small-scale arguments. Democracy must be given a chance of making up its mind on the large-scale arguments, leaving the detailed interpretation to people over whom it retains a general rather than a detailed control. One suspects that those who throw down a host of small-scale arguments are not sincerely interested in the effective working of democracy.

An example from the past will make the matter clearer. What was the large-scale argument between the Opposition and the Government between 1931 and 1939? It ran something like this.

“Here, in Manchuria, in 1932, this evil thing,—aggression and international lawlessness,—has been reintroduced into the world. A million of our own men died to drive out this thing for ever. From the British Empire?—No.—From the world. Now here it is again.

“At this moment this evil thing is so weak in relation to the moral, the economic, and the military strength of the forces of good in the world, that if it were to come to a conflict . . .”

“Yes, but I don’t want a conflict, I want to keep the peace.”

“I am not asking you what you want, I am asking you to follow a world-wide argument step by step, and I am saying that *if* there were a conflict at this moment, there is no doubt that the tiny forces of world evil would be overwhelmed with very little trouble. Is that right or wrong? . . . Very well then. If this evil is allowed to succeed, it will spread. It will spread in two ways. First, other countries, seeing its success, will be infected with the same will to evil; secondly, countries not in the least

infected themselves with this evil, will be attacked and captured one by one by those who are."

"But this process will give us valuable time to rearm."

"No doubt you will do a certain amount of rearming, but is it not reasonable to suppose that the forces of evil,—now so punily weak that they would not dare to challenge you,—will rearm with a more furious concentration of effort than your own? And in addition to their arming themselves faster than you, remember that in the coming process whole nations that are now on the side of right,—with all their harbours, fields, factories, and armed forces,—will be won over, or will be dragged over, to the side of evil. Thus, inevitably, whatever you do, if you allow evil to succeed now, though you may grow stronger *than you are now*, world evil, *in relation to you*, will grow stronger still. And in due course, no part of the world, not even your own possessions, will remain safe from it. Therefore, it is not a question whether you will oppose evil or not. The question is whether you will oppose it now, or wait till it is stronger."

As each opportunity of resisting evil was missed, the argument was repeated with ever more and more urgency on the next occasion.

I have never once heard any Government supporter in public or in private who would consent to address his mind to this argument. On every occasion they ran off into little tiny controversies about as big as postage stamps. Every one of these arguments is revealed immediately as nonsense when,—and only when,—placed against the background of the world-wide case.

"Ah, you see the trouble was the navy was short of shells."

"Some part of your service will always be said to be short of something. Do you on that account always want to wait until evil has multiplied its relative strength another three or four fold?"

"Oh, you see the So-and-Sos will let us down."

"If we firmly remind the So-and-Sos that they must make their choice between defending international justice with us now or standing out in the cold by themselves for ever, they probably will not let us down. But even assuming that some countries will let us down now, do you imagine that more, or that fewer, countries will let us down when the forces of evil are yet stronger in two or three years' time?"

We are engaged in war to-day with fewer allies than we should have had at any other time, against a foe more formidable in relation to our own strength than he would have been at any other time, precisely because we allowed little arguments of this kind to influence our judgments and did not set them in their proper perspective against the background of the over-riding world-wide causes.

Surely this is sufficient warning to us that we must think in really big terms if we are to succeed.

Harold Nicolson, who has often doubted the wisdom of the Government's foreign policy, now makes the best case for it he can in his "Why Britain is at War" (Penguin Special). But I venture to suggest that he too falls into error by thinking in terms far too small. He treats the matter as if it all rested on our estimate of Herr Hitler's personal character. If, he suggests, Herr Hitler could be trusted only to attack small nations without ever attacking us, then our policy, though unworthy, may have been expedient. If Herr Hitler could not be so trusted, then our policy was as unwise as dishonourable. But it was not a question of Herr Hitler's private character. Herr Hitler was not a cause but a symptom of world evil which we allowed to advance unchecked in all its manifestations whether under his guidance or that of someone else because we failed to think in big enough terms.

CHAPTER II

THE WAR

THE Ministry of Information has published a leaflet entitled "Assured Victory." Our people no doubt vaguely realise that "it's going to be worse" and that "sacrifices will be demanded." But in my experience there is a very general impression that, on the whole, all we have to do is to sit down behind the Maginot Line, work rather hard, strangle Germany's trade, build up our own resources, and wait for the day when Germany will collapse economically, or when we shall go in with forces so overwhelming that German resistance will be futile.

Are these rather rosy expectations in any way justified by the real facts?

Miraculous victories won, secret weapons discovered, unbelievable blunders perpetrated,¹ by one side or the other, may falsify a prophecy built up on the most careful calculations.

Then there is one sense in which a "moral collapse" inside Germany is not quite impossible. The German people, raised to a mystical exaltation by Herr Hitler, bludgeoned into stupidity by Goebbels and Himmler, overworked and underfed for three years past by Goering and Ley, might just conceivably crumple up under war strain. It is just possible that a nervous and spiritual exhaustion might stand between them and their necessary war effort.

¹ Included in miraculous victories are miraculous diplomatic victories, and in unbelievable blunders are unbelievable moral blunders, either of which might bring in vast forces now neutral on one side or the other.

I would not even rule out the possibility of their finding themselves the victims of some physical epidemic such as that which swept Europe after the last war. But the human frame is a fairly tough organisation, and it would clearly be unwise to base our calculations on any such hopes of its early disintegration throughout the German Reich.

Nor do I rule out the possibility that the largest German financial interests, now threatened by the Frankenstein monster which they have created, may succeed in cutting off its head and in making an early peace with Britain and France in order to switch the war against Russia. In a later chapter I give reasons for regarding this as unlikely.

But though we can envisage the possibility of all manner of flukes and chances we cannot base our serious judgment upon them. We must soberly consider the large-scale factors in the situation and their probable developments.

The first is this. We shall never produce in the great mass of the German people a moral breakaway from Herr Hitler and his party as long as we continue our present line of propaganda. Our present propaganda fails; but it does not fail because it goes unheard by the Germans. Reliable neutrals report that in spite of all penalties a surprisingly high proportion of the German people either listen to our broadcasts or hear directly from someone else who has listened. Our leaflets must have been picked up and read by thousands. Our views can also be introduced in to Germany by the illegal organisations. In fact we can quite easily be heard if we have anything to say.

The trouble is that our present propaganda, even when

clearly heard and fully understood by the German, makes no appeal to him whatever.

What is it that we are offering him? It would be easy to prove my case by selecting the worst that we are offering him. Many of those who represent what ought to be the best opinion in France, and, secretly, a number of our own reactionaries are proposing to the German that his country shall be cut up into several small pieces under separate governments, and that any German national leader who tried to express the popular will for national reunion should be suppressed,—by French force. In this way the German would be “freed” from the danger of finding himself under the leadership of a man who would compel him to fight against France. In what other respects the German would be free is not quite so clear.

But what is it that even our most enlightened leaders are offering to the Germans at the present moment? We offer them Federal Union. Some of those who support Federal Union are no doubt sincere in their desire to find in it something bigger and better than the League of Nations. But it gives cause for grave anxiety to find Federal Union supported by so many of the people who, in the last years, manifestly desired that the League should be both smaller and worse.¹

Of course we are not going to insist on reparations this time,—except for a little something by way of compensation to Poland, Czechoslovakia, . . . and perhaps France?

We do not propose, this time, to take any of the German colonies away! We do, of course, intend to provide some machinery to make sure that Europe shall not again

¹ See also on the subject of Federal Union, pages 151-155.

be attacked by Germany. Indeed, there is just a chance that if the Germans revolted and threw out Hitler in such a way as to lose the war, they would be asked to disarm first,—as an essential preliminary, of course, to the general disarmament which would follow.—Or wouldn't it?

Internally the Germans are to be free. There is no doubt that millions of Germans must nourish a hatred of the tyranny of the Nazi régime. In some cases this hatred is conscious and only suppressed by fear of the secret police. In far more cases it is unconscious and will remain dormant until conditions are created favourable to its growth.

Therefore, if we offer the Germans freedom, they are likely to respond. But what sort of freedom do we offer to the great masses of the German people? Unfortunately we offer them not the sort of freedom that the peoples themselves desire, but much more the sort of freedom which those who make the offer find most attractive themselves,—and the people who make the offer are the people who now rule Britain and France.

Yes indeed, they say, the German peoples shall be freed from totalitarian restrictions. They shall be freed to trade how they will. No more blocked marks or frozen credits. No more universal control over raw materials. The German indeed shall be freed from the tyranny of the State, which shall not be allowed to interfere in every man's little business. Government direction shall be replaced by the free play of the laws of supply and demand which shall not be distorted by giant government orders for munitions, for unprofitable public works, nor yet thrown out of joint by government injunctions to "export or die".

Of course, they go on, the transition from a totalitarian to a "free" Germany will not be an easy process, and the allies will generously grant loans to the German business men. Of course these business men will realise that the loans will one day have to be repaid,—with modest interest,—and naturally no one could object to the claims of those who have made the loans to having some sort of say in the matter of how the borrowing industries should be run,—a sort of international (or "Federal") organisation could be set up for this very purpose.

And naturally the German people shall be allowed once again to go back to Democracy and organise political parties and vote at elections by secret ballot.

Domestically then it would be a nice little liberal republic,—or would it be a conservative monarchy?—all nicely owned and controlled by the German opposite numbers of the Federation of British Industries who in their turn would be owned and controlled by "international",—i.e. by Franco-British-American,—finance. Abroad, it would be another Europe in which,—put whatever top dressing you like on it,—the decisions of Britain and France would "go".

In other words we are asking the Germans to return to the Europe and the Germany of 1927. We need not assume that the offer is insincere. The people who make it honestly believe that it is an attractive offer, and one which ought to persuade the German workers to throw themselves against the machine-guns of the Reichswehr and the secret police. The people who make the offer were really quite comfortable in 1927. It was a good year from their point of view and they see no reason why anyone else should object to going back to it.

Unfortunately the answer of the German people is that they remember 1927. (They also, of course, remember 1919, and when we offer them 1927 it is not too difficult for Goebbels to persuade them that what we mean is 1919.) But assuming we could convince them that we really meant 1927, the answer of the German people is that they know all about it. They know what it was, and they know what it led to, and rather than face all that all over again at our hands and at the hands of their own Big Business men, they will fight against us, even if it means fighting for Herr Hitler, to the last bullet and to the last crust of bread. And if the Germans make up their minds to fight in this way, they have shown that they possess an uncomfortable knack of killing at least one for one.

Then what is likely to happen if the Germans fight in this way?

In the last war the German people fed themselves for four years before they collapsed. They have at least equal access to the outside world, indeed to-day they have far greater potential access to the outside world than they had then. Trade with Russia may not mean much to-day, but all are agreed that with two years in which to develop Russian production and Russo-German transport, trade with Russia might mean a very great deal,—and it is in the third or fourth year that we hope to win. Moreover, in the first half of the last war the Germans lost over a million men on the active fighting fronts. We do not know what may happen even in the next weeks, between the writing and the publication of these words. But unless there are to be major land engagements month after month throughout this war the Germans will not

lose these same million men, and will therefore have the opportunity of employing these men to extract more food from their soil. Let us therefore face the fact that if we are hoping to starve the Germans out, it may take us not merely longer, but much longer, than in the last war, and we may not be able to do it at all.¹

The next hope of those who look for an early victory is that while we may not succeed in exhausting German food supplies we may bring other parts of their economic machine to a standstill so that they will no longer be able to produce the necessary instruments of war.

In the last war, once again with no greater, and more probably substantially less, access to the outside world, German industry succeeded in pouring out, month after month, the enormous volumes of war material needed to carry on the land battles of the Western and several other fronts. If necessary they can do this again.

But will this be necessary?

Once the Germans have created sufficient supplies to fight, say, six months of intensive land warfare,—and it is reasonably to be presumed that they have done this already,—there is no way of compelling their industry to devote itself to these ends unless we can force them to blow their existing supplies to pieces. We can only do this by attacking them, and all military experts are agreed that we cannot attack the prepared positions of the Siegfried Line with a general all-round superiority of less than six, or some say ten, to one. Such an all-round

¹ Apart from large stores of general foodstuffs which the Germans have probably piled up, it is quite certain that they have made stores of particular foodstuffs such as cod-liver oil from lack of which they largely failed last time.

military superiority we shall never possess. Some people therefore look for other fronts. It is quite possible that the Germans may create other fronts, and we could perhaps create one if it is possible, as it may be, for our navy to break into the Baltic. Apart from this, a glance at the map will show that there is no other front to which we should not have to transport our supplies by very tedious land and sea routes while the Germans could supply their soldiers by much shorter routes mainly consisting of fine autobahns. It would therefore be foolish to look for any end to the war, now or in the future, by a run-away military victory.

But the military situation reacts on the economic: If we cannot compel German industry to devote its resources to the same ends as it served in the last war, these resources can be diverted to other ends. Amongst other things they can create tractors and agricultural implements of all kinds to reduce our slender chances of starving them. But in addition, they will have quite enough left over to turn out submarines, aeroplanes, mines, and bombs in hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands, and million respectively.

If it is said that they cannot train the necessary personnel, I admit that it needs more effort to train a pilot or a submarine crew than to train an infantry platoon. But in the second and third years of the last war Germany had to train, in modern warfare, the million men who replaced those who were killed in the first and second year, and if we cannot launch a major land attack,—or rather, as we cannot launch a major land attack,—it will not be necessary for them to train anything like this number of new infantrymen, and the training problem for

submarines and pilots ought to be within the powers of the German war machine.

I do not by any means say that we cannot win in the end. It is entirely possible that our resources, plus the resources of those who are, or may become, our allies, may eventually wear the Germans down. It is equally possible that close co-operation between Germany and Russia might, by about the third fourth or fifth year of the war, produce a flood of war materials against which we could not compete.¹

It is not, however, any part of my argument to over-emphasise those possibilities which, if they were to become realities, could lead to our ultimate defeat. As far as possible I want to deal in certainties, not in possibilities. And, barring miracles, it is quite certain, on the calculations made above, that there can be no early end to this war morally, economically, or militarily, on the lines on which we are fighting it now.

Some people, particularly those who are rather better off, will say, "What of it? If we have to fight for twenty years, we can fight, we can pay, we can face the sacrifice."

We have to ask most seriously who is going to pay? What are the sacrifices going to be? What guarantee have we that they will be worth while? Is there no other way?

We started the last war with standard income tax at 1s. 3d. and national debt at about seven hundred millions. We start to-day with standard income tax at 7s. 6d. and national debt at about nine thousand millions. In the last war we mobilised and sold an immense total of foreign

¹Something is said about the chances of German-Russian co-operation on pages 108-113.

investments. We have considerable foreign investments to-day, but not on the same scale. Some say that the rich are going to pay for the war. "With income tax up to 17s. 6d. in the pound there's no more need to talk about inequality,—there won't be any rich men at the end of this war." Will there not?

It is worth realising to what extent it is true that "income tax" is 17s. 6d. in the pound. On an income of £1,000 a year one pays 4s. in the pound; on £10,000 one pays 10s. 6d.; even on an income of £100,000 one only pays 16s. 3d., leaving the taxpayer in possession of about £83 per day. Already all our pundits of national finance are tentatively preparing the ground for the news that there must be a reduction in working-class standards of living. No doubt the most essential skilled workers in arms industries will be able to keep their wage rates more or less abreast of rising prices. But it is quite certain that the average workers and the pensioners will not.

It is uncertain whether the sacrifices demanded of these people will be as great, on the basis of a mathematical proportion of their income, as the sacrifices of the rich, but it is not quite good enough to work out sacrifices on the basis of a mathematical proportion. The rich man whose income tax increases so as to reduce his income by 25% is sacrificing far less than the poor man whose purchasing power is reduced by 10%. Sacrifice is a physical, not a financial, affair. There is no physical pain connected with the writing of a cheque to the Chancellor for the very largest amount. The sacrifice only begins when a man cannot purchase what he could have purchased if he had not paid the tax. From this point of view a man whose income before the war was

£100,000 would sacrifice almost nothing if his taxation rose to £95,000, or 19s. in the pound. In every human essential one can live just as good a life on £5,000 as on £100,000. One's house may be smaller, but everyone sleeps in a separate room. One's staff may be smaller, but there is still someone else to light the fire. One's car may be smaller, but it still goes. One's sons may not go to a public school,—but why should they if they cannot win the open scholarships? In comparison with this, a mere 5% reduction in the purchasing power of a working family is immediately reflected in the most definite physical privation and pain. This is the more true since the considerable number of charges such as rent and insurance are fixed and a 5% reduction in the total income means therefore perhaps a 15% reduction in the sum available for food.

Let there then be no doubt about it, as we are going now, this war will be financed by far greater physical sacrifices from the poor than from the rich.

For what are we asked to make these sacrifices? What is the moral stimulus which is to drive our people on to bear these sacrifices? We are fighting against something which is hellish enough in all conscience, and that will carry us a long way. To oppose this thing our people will suffer much. But is this enough? What, after all, are we fighting and sacrificing *for*?

Too many people remember the jargon of the last war, and although nebulous phrases about deep changes and new social orders may suffice in the early stages of the war, have we the right to expect that these same phrases will continue to inspire the necessary enthusiasm when the real sacrifices begin?

After all, if we come out of this war undefeated, it is certain that our whole economic structure will be shaken to its very foundations. There will be, roughly speaking, two ways of rebuilding it. Either we can adopt an organisation under which there will no longer be a little clique at the top,—numbering perhaps half a million people or about $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ of our population,—drawing one quarter of the national income; either we can adopt some system under which we will all more or less share alike; or we can “recover”, and re-establish the old “economic security” of our industry, by paying less to the workers, and by allowing the people now at the top, (or their successors), to retain just the same power of directing the whole economic life of the country even though on incomes somewhat smaller than at present. It is quite certain that there are thousands of people who will struggle for the latter alternative, being quite prepared to abolish civil liberties if necessary in the process. They will do this, not necessarily out of selfishness, but because they do quite sincerely identify the ending of their kind of society with the complete collapse of everything known as civilisation. Are we to expect the great mass of our people to struggle and sacrifice to the end unless, during the course of the conflict, we take steps which make it utterly impossible for our reconstruction to take place along any other than the former,—the only equitable,—lines?

But this is not all. The matter has so far been considered as if the only sacrifices that will be required of us are those represented by the essential transference of national effort from domestic production to production of the instruments required for our war effort. The impact

of German war effort upon our people has not even been considered.

The German people, feeding themselves for four years as they can, producing the instruments of death in immense quantities as they can, training the necessary technicians to direct those machines as they can, will exact from our people a toll of human suffering and destruction out of all proportion to anything we suffering in the last war. We shall be brought much closer to starvation than we were in the last war. The destruction of our own towns will be out of all proportion greater than that of the last war. Our casualties in sheer numbers may be somewhat less. They are quite as likely to be far more. They will certainly take place much nearer home.

This then is the situation which confronts us. It is the most hideous nightmare that has ever confronted humanity. Some of our people have a vague idea of the total suffering inflicted on mankind in the Spanish Civil War in which the numbers of men and of instruments of destruction ranged on each side were as nothing compared to the terrible array of the forces of death which are now poised, waiting to pour themselves out, upon the peoples of Britain, France, and Germany.

If we could be quite certain that all this suffering would bring us something which would be worth while, and if there were no other alternative but to endure it, then there is no doubt that as a people we could face it. But nobody has yet given us any sort of assurance that all this suffering is going to lead to anything better than we know to-day.

And there is another way out.

The first essential if we are to find this way is a passionate

desire in every one of us that we shall find it, and a resolute determination that any one and any thing and above all any preconceived idea that stands in our way shall be swept aside.

We are an extremely brave people in the face of physical danger. Though no individual can be quite sure how he will behave under fire or in an air raid, and though those who feel the bravest to-day might find themselves lying flat on their faces whimpering with fear, the majority of us, even wounded ourselves and perhaps half choked with gas as well, would very calmly set about the business of caring for those who were yet more badly damaged. This kind of bravery, when the need arises, is a wonderful thing. But it is a complete mistake to assume that our present national attitude,—“I don’t worry,—I can take what’s coming to me,”—is the highest form of human courage.

There is another kind of courage,—the mental courage to think and proclaim new thoughts,—and this kind of courage is required of us not only at the tense moments of action when sheer excitement comes to our aid, but all the time. Have we this kind of courage too?

“I’ll take what’s coming to me” is wonderful if “something” is bound to come. But it is a wholly inadequate,—a disastrously inadequate,—answer, if there is another way. Twenty million,—a hundred million,—British and German heroes may just stand there blowing each other’s brains out for the next ten years or more because every one of them is prepared to “take what is coming to him” without worrying.

But you are not entitled to consider this question only as it affects yourself. You are heroic, but you are not

sufficiently heroic, if you stand there waiting for what is coming. You are not sufficiently heroic because your actions affect others as well as yourself. Because you stand there fully prepared to take what is coming to you, you are contributing your share to a situation in which millions of others will have to take what is coming to them, when perhaps, if you had the additional courage that is required of you, you and they could find another way to a more sure salvation.

There are your children, your family, your friends, and all humanity; and you have not the right to take your little part in the great mass decision,—or rather the great mass indecision,—which will mean that all these people will have to “take” all the horrors that are coming to them now.

And if you say that these people must look out for themselves, then I say there are others who must be considered who have no chance of looking out for themselves. And these are the children yet unborn, the men and women of to-morrow. A great part of what you possess to-day,—your railways, your harbours, your churches, your public buildings, even your houses, inadequate though they be,—are not of your own making. The great inventions, the steam engine, the dynamo, the spinning loom, the printing press, these things that lighten your toil even now while still in the hands of others, these are not your work. They are the creation of men now dead. You have no right now to smash these things to pieces and to force your children’s children to live all their lives lower lives merely because you have not now the moral courage to find a way which does not involve the destruction of all these things.

You yourself, young man, for all you know, may be a Shakespeare, a Marconi, or even a Walt Disney. You say it is unlikely. In your particular case, perhaps it is. But in your ranks,—the ranks of those who will be destroyed if we march unthinkingly forward to our fate,—are thousands who, if they could live, would enrich the heritage of mankind for centuries into the future. You have no right unthinkingly to march the whole company of these men to their destruction.

I plead with you first, therefore, that if there is another way by which humanity can avoid this hideous massacre, you will throw in the whole of your strength, the whole of your mind, the whole of your soul, and the whole of your courage, with those who are working to direct humanity along this course.

It is the purpose of this book, through a careful examination of many factors, some of which may seem at first to be far removed from our most immediate dangers, but all of which will be related to them in the end, to show this way.

I will only say one thing here. The situation which confronts us now has been brought about because we have based all our public life, both national and international, on the principle of selfishness. If this is so, it surely suggests that we should be wise to look for our salvation in the adoption of an entirely new standard of morality.

CHAPTER III

A NEW MORALITY

WE have failed because of our selfishness, and we need a new standard of morality.

This last statement will make different impressions on many different people, and I must expand it a little in order that I shall not be misunderstood.

There are first of all those who believe that no man on this earth is ever moved by moral considerations, but only by economic motives. With these people I disagree. Pure disinterested morality is an immense driving force in mankind. Equally the forces of evil can dress themselves up in forms which will persuade millions of people to act in diametric opposition to their economic advantages. Moreover it is not true that no one individual is moved by morality alone. They are so moved. I have worked, these last eight years, with great numbers of such people in North Devon. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. To these people I make my appeal on moral grounds, believing that on these grounds I shall succeed.

Yet of course economic forces are even more powerful than moral, and in the long run,—maybe the very long run,—they will prevail. And as to those who are only moved by these forces, I hope, at the end of this book, to persuade them that they must accept the new morality, not merely because it is moral, but because it is the only way in which they can be saved.

I have no illusions about those people who, as a body, now control our destinies. Here and there one or other

of them may suddenly see the light. But as a body, there is no hope whatever of their conversion. I will not make the same mistake as Robert Owen who thought he could persuade the employers of the 1820's as a whole to treat their workmen more generously by showing them that it was a more moral thing to do. It is not on account so much of individual selfishness that these people cannot hope to see. It is rather that subconsciously they cannot believe that any other system than their own can represent anything else than the complete disappearance of civilisation. For "civilisation" as they know it, they will struggle to the end.

Then again I should be misunderstood if I offered any support to those who would like to feel nice and moral without disagreeing with Mr. Chamberlain, and who desire,—deeply desire,—a change in the hearts of men, but who will yet say, "Yes, I wish we could help the Chinese, but don't you think it is *all* rather futile until the hearts of men are changed."

On the contrary, our change of heart must be translated into action, into actual practice at once, in the form of a passionate endeavour to create social and international justice here and now. This endeavour includes a determination that if we cannot persuade all men at once to accept our new morality, at least we shall make sure that the destiny of our nation and of mankind is in the hands of those who do accept it, and not in the hands of those who do not.

Lastly, I should be misunderstood if it were thought that what I am asking for could be correctly described as a religious revival. I entirely disagree with the Communist view of religion. Conrad Noel, in his *Life of Jesus*,

which should be read by anyone who agrees with the spirit of this book, has dealt with this question with a brilliance which I cannot hope to surpass or equal. "‘Religion,’ said Karl Marx, ‘is the opium of the people,’ but I would remind my readers," says Noel, "that Charles Kingsley, Canon of the Church of England and most popular of novelists, was saying the same thing, and at the same time. Writing of the generality of the clergy of his day he says, ‘We have never told you that the . . . true poor man’s book, the true God’s voice against tyrants, idlers, and humbugs, was the Bible. Ay, you may sneer, but so it is. It is our fault, our great fault that you should sneer, sneer at the only news that ought to be your glory and your strength. It is our fault. We have used the Bible as if it were the special constable’s hand book,—*an opium dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they were being overloaded*,—a mere book to keep the poor in order.’ (May 1848)."

It might well be that a great revival of religious activity might be one of the *effects* of what is now required. But none the less, religious revival would not be the right name for the thing in itself, for this would seem to require of us a particular belief in God and a particular expression of our worship.

What we need now is the adoption, in our public and political life, of those elementary ethical principles to which we have long paid lip-service in our churches. .

It is necessary to look a little more carefully at the connection between religion and politics. Religion requires of us that we believe in God and that we regulate our lives according to certain definite principles. These principles are not separated from the belief in God. On

the contrary, they derive their authority from Him. This means that the priest or minister, in speaking to those who, of their own free will, believe in God, can commend the ethical principles as not merely reasonable in themselves, but also as being directly inspired by the Deity. On the other hand the priest has no power of physical compulsion. He cannot compel any man to believe in God or to observe the ethical principles. If a man does not choose to do these things, he is free to leave the religious society.

The statesman on the other hand must enforce his laws. If men do not agree, in the last resort they must be physically compelled to obey, and they will usually find it extremely difficult to leave the political society. As against this, the statesman cannot commend his laws as having the authority of God. It is really blasphemy in a national or in an international political conflict to insist that God *must* be on our side. But surely even a politician, quite apart from all questions of belief in God, may point out that all the acknowledged saints of history have in fact recommended certain ethical principles for the conduct of our daily lives; and surely he may suggest to the people that it would probably be an advantage to try to build up a society founded upon these principles and to reject a society which is founded upon their complete negation.

Putting the matter more specifically, when you are commanded to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength, this is something which lies outside the proper sphere of any politician. But when you are commanded to love your neighbour as yourself, then the statesman might well pay attention, and the people might try to choose statesmen who show that they have paid attention.

With great respect, and in spite of many outstanding individual exceptions, it seems to me that the Christian Church as an institution has largely forgotten that "Love your neighbour as yourself" is one of the two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. On this account the Church has drifted sadly away from the great flowing tide of world events which really stir the hearts of men.

Moral issues are for the Church, political and economic issues for the politician and economist. This may be a good general rule. But what happens when vital moral issues are involved in questions which have become the subject of acute political controversy? By a disastrous misconception of its proper function the Church has assumed that on all these issues it must stand aside and take no part.

What would have happened if every pulpit in the land had thundered against the factory conditions of the early industrial revolution? "We care not one jot or tittle for your iron laws of economics. We care nothing about the alleged financial ruin of the country. These are not our concern. We have one thing to say in the name of God and in the name of religion, and no earthly considerations will move us from it. It is this,—You, you millowner in the front pew, as long as you send women down your mines, as long as you send children into your factories, you are not of this church. How you run your factories, how you run your mines, without these women and children is no concern of ours. We say as long as you treat these fellow men of yours in this inhuman way, you are not of the kingdom of God."¹

¹ In suggesting that this form of teaching might have begun in the early years of the industrial revolution I am not in any way suggesting that it ought not to be continued at the present day.

Or to come to more recent times, when the Italians began to pour poison gas on the Abyssinian natives, what would have happened if the whole Church had taken up the cause as a matter of Christian morality following by inescapable argument from the peremptory commandment to love your neighbour as yourself? "We do not care about the shortage of shells in the navy. That is not our province. It is our duty to demand of you, do you or do you not love these African peoples as you love yourselves? If someone poured gas on you, if someone fired one single bullet into one little corner of the British Empire, would you wait to argue about the shell supply in the British Navy? You chairman of the local Conservative Association, there in the front pew, as long as you protest that in spite of your desire, there is nothing that can be done to save these savages from their hideous fate, we tell you that you are not of the kingdom of God."

If the Church had spoken in this way, it would have lost all its big subscribers, it would have saved its own soul, we should not have had the worst squalor of the last century, and we should not now be at war.

All that is in the past. What of the future? Is it too much to hope that the Church will not always turn tail whenever it approaches any moral field which is also partly occupied by the politicians? Surely not. But in anticipation of such a change on the part of the Church it seems to me not inappropriate that some of the politicians should move forward into some of those fields which are supposed to be reserved for the Church and should preach not only the immediate practical reforms which may materially benefit the people, but also those spiritual changes without which we seem likely to remain

indefinitely bound up in all the miseries which have plagued the world these many, many years.

In short, that you shall love your neighbour as yourself must be made an established fact. It must be made our touchstone by which we test each political proposal. In every case we must ask ourselves two questions: "Is this the kind of thing that we would do if we really loved our neighbours as ourselves?" "Is this the kind of political and economic organisation which requires for its operation men moved by a determination that they will love their neighbours as themselves;—or, on the other hand, is this the kind of political and economic organisation which will be more successfully developed by quite different men?"

It is quite certain that we have not been guided by right answers to these questions in the past.

We have attempted to run our world under a certain economic system, which we called the system of private property, the system of free competition, the system of individual enterprise. This system was based upon a certain quite definite moral philosophy. According to this moral philosophy it was not merely the right but the duty of a man to concern himself with his own personal private interest because in that way he could be sure that he was automatically promoting the interests of the whole community. To every class in the community we said, "Look after yourself." To the landlord we said, "Get the highest rent you can, for the man who will pay you the highest rent is obviously the man who can make the best use of the land, and it is to the advantage of the community that the land be used by those who can make the best use of it." To the rich man we said, "Invest

your money. Invest it wisely. Invest it so as to bring in the richest rewards for yourself. For when, by your enterprise, you have discovered the investments which will yield you the highest dividends, then automatically your money must be supporting those ventures which are most needed by the community." But even to the working man our system required of us that we should preach self, self, self. Never did we say to him, "Work to produce for your neighbour because you love him, and he, because he loves you, will produce for you". On the contrary we said, "Make yourself independent." (Does it not sound attractive?) "Work hard—for yourself. Improve the position,—of yourself and your children." ("Improve your position" being a polite way of saying "Get yourself into another class".) "Save for yourself, and then, who knows, you yourself may one day own a little business and employ others."

The Church, of course, made certain efforts to reconcile an economic life based on self with the doctrine of religion. It told people not to be too harsh. Contrary to the law which forbade usury altogether the Church tolerated moderate usury but discouraged anything over 10%. The Church tried to point out, too, that those who devoted themselves with single-minded attention to the well-being of others,—those who worked hardest for the community,—would in fact earn the highest rewards. In these efforts the Church almost wholly failed. How many instances could be found in which a church warden has voluntarily insisted on a profit of only 5% when he found a purchaser quite willing to complete a transaction at a price which allowed him 10%? Moreover, in spite of the protestations of the Church it remained too obvious that the man who

made a successful corner in wheat received a far higher reward than the man who spent all his days conscientiously growing it. And although the rich were told over and over again to love their neighbours, the fact remains that even to-day if you could gather together into one hall everyone whose income exceeds £5,000 a year, you would not find them loving the unemployed in just the same way as they love themselves. Indeed there would probably be a very substantial majority vote for the proposition that the unemployed are far too well paid anyway.

There was a fundamental reason why the Church was bound to fail in its attempt to reconcile nineteenth-century economics to morality. This is the first occasion on which I will appeal particularly to those who take their Church seriously that they shall not allow small-scale arguments to say "No", when large-scale arguments say "Yes". The economic doctrine founded on Self was not something running alongside of Christian ethics, though perhaps just a little divergently. It was not something which by some small effort could be brought into uniformity with Christian teaching. On the contrary, there is no doctrine which could be more diametrically opposed to the second great commandment than this economic doctrine which enjoined on all men that they should look after their own self-interest. Is this right or wrong?

This conflict of economic with religious teaching cannot be reconciled, and as long as we attempt to live in a society based upon this fundamental contradiction we shall inevitably suffer from inequality, envy, malice, greed, and, —in one form or another,—from unending strife. There is no ultimate reconciliation except in a system of common ownership.

I ask that this argument should be either accepted or answered on its own plane. If there is some way of reconciling these two irreconcilables, then let us hear of it. But do not let anyone say,—“Oh yes, I know they are quite irreconcilable, but, you see, under common ownership you find it very difficult to develop and exploit new inventions or new technical processes.¹ I therefore prefer to go on under private ownership.”

Of course nothing is said about common ownership in the Bible. Long before and long after the dawn of the Christian era more than 90% of the wealth of most communities would be in land. By the law the land of Palestine was apportioned among the tribes and among the families. Every fifty years, at the year of Jubilee, which Jesus upheld (Luke iv. 18), the land was reapportioned to the families, no matter who might have acquired it in the meantime. All peasant communities have suffered from the power of the rich to acquire the land of the poor and reduce them to slavery mainly through money-lending. This happened in ancient Rome, ancient Greece, Russia until 1917, and happens in India to-day. Therefore by the Jewish law all usury, all lending out of anything for profit, was forbidden. If a man had anything of which his neighbour stood in want, he would lend it to him without charge or interest. It would surely seem that such an economic society,—if all the laws were strictly observed in letter and spirit,—would provide an atmosphere pretty close to that of common ownership,—certainly an atmosphere in which a man could live and work, at all times obeying the rule to love his neighbour as himself.

¹ A number of objections of about this size are dealt with in Chapter Seven.

It is not irreverent to suggest that economic organisations such as a Welsh coal mine, an I.C.I. plant at Billingham, the *Queen Mary*, and the Great Western Railway were never present to the minds of the early Christians at all. It is impossible to apply the simple Palestinian economic laws to the economic machinery of to-day. You cannot divide the Great Western Railway up in strips and share it out every fifty years among the porters and their families. To-day the only form of organisation which allows the economic and the moral incentive to coincide is that of common ownership. Only when we, as a people, own the means of production in common can we call upon ourselves and each other to work and produce and to use our best endeavours not for ourselves, not of course for others to the exclusion of ourselves, but for ourselves and for the community because we love our neighbours as ourselves.

It was not only the Church which attempted to reconcile self-seeking and common welfare.

The economists of the last century thought they could do it without reference to any moral concepts at all. Everything in their view could be accomplished by the force of free competition working under the laws of supply and demand. Competition would prevent any man from over-reaching himself, would pass on all the benefits of scientific progress automatically to the consumer. If there were too few nuts and bolts in the world, the competition of buyers would drive up the price and some good self-seeking entrepreneur would make more of them. If there were too much asparagus in the world the price of asparagus would go down and the entrepreneurs would stop growing it. The theory even went so far as to suggest

that if there were too much labour in the world the price of labour would go down and women would stop producing it; but this was an aspect of the matter which was not too widely publicised.

I do not wish to argue as to whether competition was or was not capable of accomplishing the necessary reconciliation. There may have been about the middle of the last century a period of a few decades in which it was more or less true to say that the world was actually run in practice according to the theory of free competition between vast numbers of small independent producers as described by the economist of the classical school. The period did not last very long. It is definitely ended to-day.

To-day, although you know a dozen little men who are running their own independent little businesses in fierce competition with their little local rivals, the world is no longer run by men such as these.

The trouble about free competition is that somebody is apt to win. When somebody wins, no one else can ever compete with him again on equal terms. He becomes a monopoly or a combine or a chain store. It is pathetic to hear small traders ask for free competition and no more Woolworths. Woolworths is just a small trader who has won.

In many cases the battle is not fought to final victory. The leading men, so well aware of the pains and losses which all but one must suffer in the final stages, decide to call it all off and see what profits can be won and shared by one and all in gentlemanly co-operation. And there is no power on earth which can compel men to compete when they have decided to combine.

I shall very frequently use the words "monopoly" and "monopoly capitalism", and I do not want to be accused

of talking nonsense merely because it is not strictly true that the whole of the world has been monopolised. Quite strictly a monopolised industry is an industry the whole of which belongs to one man or one firm. But industries move out of the realm of free competition and into the realm of monopoly control long before that stage is reached.

Industries begin their march away from free competition when the sheer size of the average plant begins to make nonsense of that happy little exhortation to the working man that if he works hard enough and saves hard enough he will one day own a little business himself. A Welsh miner would have to work pretty hard and live pretty close if he meant to end up by owning a coal mine.

The iron and steel industry to-day belongs to many different individuals and firms. But yet no developments whatever in that industry take place under the influence of free competition. Prices are not settled by free competition. Total output is not settled by free competition. These vital matters of high industrial policy are settled by little groups of men sitting round a table and consciously deciding the matter. And these men are not, as one might suppose, the servants of the community. They are the owners, or the servants of the owners, of the biggest blocks of invested capital. This state of affairs I call monopoly control.

Any industry approaches to monopoly control when all its physical assets are divided up into paper shares, owned no doubt by a large number of different owners, of whom none but the largest owners know anything about the management or even the nature of the "property" they are supposed to own.

My wife owns part of the Antwerp waterworks. My

grandmother owned part of the Argentine railway system. Neither of them knew the first thing about waterworks or railways. If they attended the shareholders' meeting where the property owners are supposed, by the classical economists, to exercise their joint care for the technical efficiency of their property, they would not understand the business. Indeed, except in the rarest instances, the whole of the business has been settled in advance by a handful of the largest shareholders together with one or two of the company directors who are, in most cases, also directors of a half-dozen other interlocking companies and organisations of one kind or another.

These are the elusive gentlemen whose comings and goings decide for all of us,—little shopkeepers and workers alike,—whether we work in conditions of boom, depression or crisis. We know nothing of them. We exercise no control over them. And according to our present organisation we have thought it proper to allow them,—in running our affairs,—to seek quite deliberately nothing else but the selfish interests of themselves and their nearest colleagues.

Quite apart from any question of the whole of an industry being owned exclusively by one firm or one individual, this is the system which I intend to describe when I use the words "monopoly capitalism".

There is hardly one product which enters into the daily life of the people which has not been withdrawn from the influence of competition and transferred to the powers of monopoly capitalism.

Flour and milling offals are in the hands of the Millers Mutual; milk is in the hands of the "Board" and the U.D.C.; meat is in the hands of Vesties; bacon is in the

hands of the big curers; tobacco is in the hands of Imperial Tobacco; chemicals are in the hands of Imperial Chemicals; soap and margarine are in the hands of Unilevers; sewing cotton is in the hands of Coates; petrol is in the hands of "the Pool"; banking is in the hands of the Big Five; iron and steel are in the hands of the British Iron and Steel Federation; insurance, cement, electric lamps, ship-building, tin, and rubber are in the hands of rings or "controls". Railways, gas, and electricity are withdrawn from private competition; housing for the workers is not undertaken by private enterprise and for the middle classes is largely in the hands of the building societies. Research would certainly reveal many more.

To-day the world is relentlessly driven to more and ever more complete monopoly control. Every private interest seeks a monopoly position. Governments support the process. War drives it further and faster. And nothing on earth that anyone can do will ever put it into reverse.

This one great and inescapable fact means that the economists, like the Church, have failed to reconcile an economic system based on self-seeking with the command that you should love your neighbour as yourself.

But above all, by their fruits ye shall know them. Under this system we have built up a perfectly hideous inequality. Our present inequality is so terrible that people living on moderate incomes can only seldom bring themselves seriously to contemplate it,—and then usually only for very brief periods.

Snug little men and women with comfortable little jobs or fortunate little investments which bring them in three or four hundred pounds a year deceive themselves, and, what is worse, disqualify themselves from taking a proper

part in the councils of the nation, if they form a mental picture of a world mainly made up of snug little people living on three or four hundred a year. It is just another aspect of the all-pervading selfishness that far too many of these people judge all proposed reforms by considering their immediate effect on snug little people earning three or four hundred pounds a year.

I do not wish to overstate my case. I do not need to. I need not concentrate attention on the conditions of, say, our four million poorest people who live in conditions in which the mothers are almost all the time physically hungry in order that the children may have something which still remains far less than enough. I am content to draw attention to something which is probably well above the general average. At least two out of three of the people you meet, live in a family in which the income is less than three pounds a week. Of these two thirds, far more than half live in a family in which the income is under £2 10s., and the average family consists of about 4 people. I am therefore understating my case in asking the snug little people to consider how £2 10s. might be spent on three, or more probably four, people. It might be divided in this sort of way.

	s.	d.	
Rent and Rates	10	0	} for 4 people this amounts to exactly 1s. per day each.
Food	28	0	
Fuel and Light	4	0	
Clothes	2	1	
T.U. and Insurance . . .	2	6	
Education, Medicine, Tobacco, Drink, Furniture, Holidays, "Luxuries", etceteras, and available for Savings . .	3	5	
	<hr/>		
	£2 10 0		

This budget represents something substantially better than what the average of two thirds of our population has to live on. How do men live at the other extreme? Open any copy of the *Tatler*, the *Sketch*, or the *Bystander* and take a look at them. There they are, and you can see the things which most concern their lives. This little clique numbers altogether several hundred thousand people whose incomes range anywhere between five pounds and one hundred pounds per day.

Most of them, if squarely confronted with this nightmare of inequality, would take refuge in the commonly held belief that if the whole national income were divided exactly equally it would only make about sixpence a week difference to the poor. So really, when it makes so little difference as that, why shouldn't I have my little bit of fun? Alternatively they take refuge in the belief that taxation is rapidly putting an end to all inequality. Neither of these beliefs is true.

No estimate is yet possible to show whether war taxation will reduce the incomes of the rich in greater proportion than the rise on the cost of living will reduce the incomes of the poor. But until the war, the very finest statistics of national income, compiled by Mr. Colin Clark,¹ showed that 1½% of the people draw 25% of the national income, the next 8½% of the people draw the next 25% of the income, and the remaining 90% of the people have to be content to live on only 50% of the income. What is more, these figures, taken in 1934, show, in spite of all the intervening taxation, a greater degree of inequality than the corresponding figures of 1913.

Let us set out Colin Clark's conclusions in the form of a table.

¹ In his *National Income and Outlay* (Published by Macmillan), Chapter Five.

11%	of the people draw	25%	of the income
8½%	" " " "	25%	" " "
90%	" " " "	50%	" " "

To get rid of the rather troublesome "halves", let us consider a typical two hundred of our people who will consist of:

3 people	who draw	50 units	of income	between them	or	16·6 units	each.
17	" "	" "	50	" "	" "	3·3	" "
180	" "	" "	100	" "	" "	·55	" "

A "unit" of income is a little bit unreal to deal with so we might assume that one unit be equal to 10s. per day.

We shall then find that

		£	s.	d.		£
3 people	take	8	6	8	per day or	25 in all
17	" "	1	9	3	" " "	25 " "
180	" "	5	6	¾	" " "	50 " "

Thus the three people, and the seventeen people, receive respectively five and twenty-eight times as much as the average of the hundred and eighty people. How would it be if the seventeen people decided that about twice as much as the average, and if the three people decided that about four times as much as the average, would be good enough for them?

The three people might then receive £1 16s. per day, making £5 8s. in all, and leaving £19 12s. over.

The seventeen people might then receive 18s. per day, making £15 6s. in all, and leaving £9 14s. over.

If now you take the £19 12s. and the £9 14s. which are left over, making £29 6s. in all, and add it to the £50 which the 180 had to divide between them, they now have £79 6s., or 8s. 9¾d. a day each, representing an increase of 58% in their standard of living.

It is not true, therefore, that the luxuries of the rich, if evenly spread, would make no difference to the conditions of the poor. On the contrary, they would improve their conditions over 50%.¹ The family living on 35s. per week could go up at once to over 52s. 6d. The family on £3 could rise to over £4 10s. These increases would make the whole difference between starvation and comfort, between just rubbing along and well-being, all the difference in fact between the conditions that would make the good life possible and the conditions which, for millions and millions of our people, make the good life utterly impossible.¹

What will you say, you rich men, if we ask you what you do that you should live so well, that you should enjoy such luxury, that you, not knowing us, should live lives we know not of, when we are here so poor.

"Well, you see, we own . . ."

I did not ask you what you own, I asked you what do you do? I ask you, each day as you live, what benefit do you confer on any man which he would lose if you should die to-morrow?

"Oh well, as well as owning, we manage . . ."

If you manage anything worth managing we are content to pay you the salary appropriate to a manager. £1,000 a year, £19 4s. 6d. every week, would seem quite large even to one of your skilled workers. But just sitting there stolidly owning something day after day is not a very useful occupation.

Some inequalities no doubt arise from salaries. Some

¹ I am ignoring completely, of course, the fact that the total size of the cake, as will be shown in the next chapter, would be far bigger under common ownership than it is to-day. I am simply considering the effect of dividing up the cake more equally.

farmers I know of doubt whether all the officials of all the Market Boards really deserve the whole of the salaries they receive. But these are not the real inequalities. The real inequalities all arise from the ownership of property.

We shall never achieve a healthy community until these inequalities are ended. And we shall not end them until we accept the principle that the mere ownership of property does not of itself entitle a man to draw an income.¹ Only when we give up "This is mine," "This is his," "This is yours," and adopt "All these are ours," shall we build a healthy community in which men will be able to live as they were commanded nearly two thousand years ago.

I have not mentioned so far our currently accepted morality in international affairs in relation to the second great commandment. We felt a little ashamed of behaving quite selfishly as individuals. Some of us tried not to. A few succeeded. Almost all who failed tried to find excuses for their individual or collective failure.

In international affairs, on the other hand, it was so universally taken for granted that the rules of Christian ethics would never be applied to the activities of nations that we have never even bothered to think up any excuses for not keeping them.

¹A great many people will not continue to read what follows with any sort of sympathy if they assume that I propose to strip the present property owners naked and throw them on the labour market to struggle for themselves like anyone else. I do not propose anything of the sort, and property owners who simply cannot bear the suspense could look ahead to pages 97-100. Others would do better to continue with the argument in the order in which I have written it.

The best Colonial administrators, of course, have done splendid things for the natives, but the British Empire was not built up to save the poor native from the witch doctor. On the contrary, it was built up partly by men who desired to make money (individual selfishness), partly by men who wanted to extend the honour and glory of the British flag (collective selfishness). We have frankly rejoiced whenever we have succeeded in getting a little bit more for ourselves, either by getting there first and merely forcing the black man to make room for us, or by turning out some other European who had got in ahead of us.

Since the last war, as a nation, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have allowed all sorts of things to happen to Manchurians, Abyssinians, Spaniards, Chinamen, Austrians, Czechoslovakians, Lithuanians, and Albanians, which we would never have allowed to happen to ourselves.

If, as a nation, we had adopted the Pacifist faith, we could have respected ourselves and asked others to respect us. It is claimed that the Bible, to which I look for inspiration, supports the Pacifist case. I am not sure of this. Where does it command us to turn someone else's other cheek, or, if we find a man who would take someone else's coat, to hand him someone else's cloak also? On the other hand, I may quote this, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." (John x. 11, 12.)

The discussion however is largely academic, as we have

in fact watched eight nations attacked and abused, one after another, at a time when everyone knows perfectly well that we would have used the whole of our resources to defend any little corner of our own possessions that had been menaced.

If we had chosen to stand firmly for the integrity of any one of these countries, I believe we could have succeeded without war.

We could have arrested aggression in 1932 with a one per cent risk of war; in 1935 with a five per cent risk of war; in July or August 1938 with a ten per cent risk of war; and even on September 28th, 1938, with a thirty per cent risk of war at the outside. Even if in each case war had been certain it would have been less hazardous than the war in which we are now engaged. Even if defeat had been certain, we should have died, as a nation, rather than see these others trampled down.

¶ It is a little bit difficult to persuade the world that we are fighting now merely from the bigness of our hearts in order to restrain aggression and restore Poland when we have done nothing to restrain aggression or to restore Manchuria, Abyssinia, Spain, China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, or Albania.

If any "practical man" sneers at me and tells me that you cannot run the world on the basis of sentimental idealism, then I appeal to the one thing the practical man is supposed to respect. I appeal to practical experience and ask him to look at the actual results of trying to run the world on some other basis. There is war from end to end of the earth. What further proof does the practical man require?

CHAPTER IV

IT CANNOT WORK

I HAVE so far spoken of our system based on selfishness as producing, in our own country, inequality, and in the world at large, war. I doubt however whether even war itself with all its sharp spectacular agonies, is responsible, decade by decade, for so great a total of slow grinding human misery as the twin evils of poverty and unemployment.

If I have not already convinced you, as a matter of morals, that we cannot go on with our present system, I can do no more.

But I want to show, as a matter of cold harsh economics, that there is no chance whatever of ending poverty or unemployment if we insist on going on with a world in which nothing whatever is done with any of our vast means of production unless the particular person who owns those means of production can see his way to make a profit out of it.

All workers of the same skill in the same part of the country earn the same wages. There may be slight differences as between one part of the country and another, greater differences as between different countries. Older, or more experienced, or more skilled workers, may receive higher wages than others. But it remains true that workers of equal skill in the same part of the country receive the same wages. There could not be, for example, in South Wales, one group of miners receiving £5 a week and another set receiving £2 a week.

Now it is quite certain that all the fields mines and factories¹ in which we work are not all as efficient as each other, are not all as productive as each other. In some fields for the same amount of work a man will produce more goods than he would produce in others. Now if all the fields were ours in common, and if we all went to work in all of them and produced as much as we could, we would divide it equitably amongst all of us (allowing larger shares for higher skill no doubt). This would undoubtedly mean that those who had the good fortune to work in the most productive would receive less than they produced under their own hands, while those who through no fault of their own, worked in the least productive fields, would receive more than they produced. And nobody at all would complain.

But as things are, we all work in somebody else's fields. Those who work in the least efficient fields produce least. But it is quite certain that they do not produce less in value than their wages, for if they did they would be dismissed,—quite properly under our system. The worker in the least efficient fields then must produce goods to a value at least equal to his wage. But all the workers of equal skill in the more efficient fields produce more than he. Their wages however are equal to his. Therefore all the workers in the fields, other than the least efficient fields, must inevitably produce a surplus over and above the wages they receive. It is not a question of being kind or unkind to the workers. If no one is employed unless somebody else makes a profit,—even if it be the most reasonable profit of one half of one per cent,—it must

¹ I cannot say "fields mines and factories" every time, so I propose to use the one word "fields" to cover all three.

be the case that all these workers produce a surplus over and above what they receive in wages. Who receives this surplus to-day? It is divided between the employer and the man (if any) who rents the employer his fields.

What is the moral justification for dividing up this surplus among this limited group instead of amongst us all?

But this is not the end of the story by any means. The worst is yet to be told.

So that we may see the problem clearly I want at first to imagine a world in which no improvements are made at all. The existing factories are maintained and repaired and kept just in the same condition as they are now. Anything which wears out is repaired or replaced. Apart from repairs and replacements, everything which is produced is consumed then and there.

Now I want to consider all the people of the world as producers earning their incomes for a year as producers. Some earn rent for the use that is made of their land and buildings. Some earn interest on the money they lend. Some earn salaries as managers. Some earn wages. And some earn profits on what they sell. I particularly want to assume that all profits are "reasonable" profits and that nobody profiteers.

Now the total cost of production of all the goods that are sold must be precisely equal to the total of all the wages, all the rents, all the interest, all the salaries, and all the reasonable profits which are paid to all the people as producers. Some may question my right to include all the profits; but surely this must be right, because I am going on to ask what must be the purchase price paid for all these goods if the producers are to go on producing.

And they will not go on producing unless their costs of production, including their reasonable profits, are covered.

Very well then, if all the goods which are produced are to be sold at a cost which covers these reasonable profits, it is essential that a sum of money equal to all the wages, all the rents, all the interest, all the salaries, all the profits, should be spent on those goods. Or in other words, everybody, whatever income he receives, and however he receives it, must spend all his income on the goods. If he does not, some goods will be left over whose producer is unable to sell them at a price which covers their cost.

But we know, in actual fact, that all the people will not spend all the money they receive on goods to consume at once. On the contrary, even among the quite poor something will be saved. The middle classes go without all sorts of things to put something by for another day. But at the top the problem is different and far more acute. What can the rich do with the vast surpluses which must automatically fall into their hands by reason of the fact that some of their workers are working on more efficient means of production than others? What can the big companies do with the huge profits they earn? They all want to expand; to increase their power; to own more and more capital or income-earning property. What is to happen to all this money which is not spent on immediate personal consumption? Or rather, what is to happen to all the men who were hoping to be employed producing the goods which would have been bought with this money if it had been spent on consumption?

Here the classical economist thinks he can provide the perfect solution. I have assumed a world in which no improvements are made, no new factories are built. This

is certainly contrary to the real world. In the real world improvements are made, new factories are constantly being built, and surely he may reasonably suggest that all this money which is not spent, or cannot be spent, on immediate consumption, is the very money which is to be used to finance the new factories, so that the men who would undoubtedly be thrown out of work if there were no improvements, are brought back again into work in order to build the new factories that are needed. In this way a perfect balance is maintained; everybody is in work, and the world steadily progresses.

This would be all very well if in fact the amount of money required for new factories was always and automatically equal to the amount of money which was not or could not be spent on immediate consumption. But is it?

This is the most vital question in the whole of our present day economy. It is just precisely at this point that the whole thing breaks down, and millions of men, all over the world, are thrown out of work, and kept out of work. And they are poorer, and the whole of the rest of the world is poorer, because the goods that they would make if it were just a question of all of us going into our factories and our fields and making goods, are never made at all.

In fact the amount of money which can *profitably* be spent on new factories is to-day far less than the amount of money which is not or cannot be spent on immediate consumption, and the world is correspondingly thrown out of joint and millions of people are thrown out of work.

It can be shown that to-day this must be so.

No individual, of course, will spend new money on a new factory unless he believes he can do so with profit to himself.

Unfortunately as time goes on the opportunities for new profitable investment, after reaching a peak, fall away, while the amount of money not spent on consumption increases.

This must be so. Surpluses not spent on consumption arise from men working on means of production which are owned by others. As time goes on the sum total of these means of production increases, and the unspent surpluses increase proportionately.

What happens to the opportunities for profitable capital development ?

At the dawn of the industrial revolution these are admittedly small. Inventions at this stage are few and their best application is only dimly understood.

But as soon as the process is fully under way the opportunities multiply a thousand fold. New inventions flow in on every hand. New processes are discovered. New transport systems open up new areas for development. In these "marvellous" days for capitalism it is never a question of "where can we turn for a profitable investment for our money?" On the contrary, the only question is "where can we find the money for the thousand profitable investments awaiting for us?" Saving becomes the greatest personal virtue,—rewarded with interest at tens and twenties per cent. All the resources of the system are employed. "Progress" marches forward without a check.

But gradually the wonderful opportunities for new investment fall away.

I do not say that there are no new opportunities for profitable capital development to-day. Of course there are. In recent years the invention of cars and of wireless

have given profitable returns to millions of pounds, and employment to thousands of men.

There are still potentially rich areas to be opened up and fully developed.¹ But these opportunities are not on the same scale as the opportunities of the middle and later years of the nineteenth century. Not only are they absolutely smaller, but, more important, in relation to the total volume of new money seeking profitable investment the disparity between those days and these is far more pronounced.

Some people think that the system always has worked and therefore always will work if only we could discover some clever little trick to correct some unfortunate little superficial malady that seems to be causing a temporary distress. This is not so.

The system has not always worked. It worked for about 120 years because in those years there were special features which cannot be repeated, which alone made it work.

Just consider the things that happened in this world between 1800 and 1920.

The population of Great Britain, France, Germany, and America, increased from 73,000,000 to 278,000,000. All the industrial cities of the world were built up out of nothing. (I appreciate that the clay beds out of which the bricks were formed were in the world in 1800, but in that year the cities were not there. By 1920 they had been built.) The merchant navies of the world were built up out of nothing. The railway system of the world was

¹ It is worth noticing that the largest area—Russia—has already been withdrawn from the field where capitalist investment is possible, and at this moment, through our folly in not supporting her cause, China is in process of being so withdrawn.

built up out of nothing. Development on this scale can never happen again.

To-day we are an industrial community and in the future we will be a greater industrial community. Always we shall be able to improve,—the more so when common ownership has guaranteed that all our resources shall be continuously employed. But the great change from an agricultural community to an industrial community can only be made once. It was made between 1800 and 1920. And nothing can ever recover for us the staggering opportunities for new profitable investment which in those years sent the world crashing from an agricultural to an industrial community in an interval of time which, judged against eternity, was but a twinkling of an eye. This is an event which cannot be repeated, and because it cannot be repeated, something has been withdrawn from our system without which it cannot stand.

In order to employ all the people, the present system imperatively requires not merely the same opportunities for capital development as those of the last century, but greater opportunities. Opportunities on this scale for this system simply are not there.

If we could discover means of communicating with the moon we might find there comparable opportunities for new development,—but something has been said already about those who address their appeals to this attractive but far distant light.

For the last twenty years, all over the world, the problem of tens of millions of men out of work within our present system has stubbornly remained and defied every attempted solution. In this country we have become so used to it that if we have only one and a half million men unemployed

we call it a boom. Only when there are two and a half million unemployed do we speak of a slump or a crisis.

But why do you stand idly there in want, you little men? There are the fields and the factories and the mines. There is no physical reason on this earth why you should not go in and work and produce the things you need. Why do you stand idle?

Because they are not our factories or our fields; and the owners are piling up surpluses and do not know where to turn to invest them at a profit. Therefore we are out of work.

And most of us sit back and accept this situation as normal. We call it "over-production" and speak of "adjusting supply to demand". "Faced with the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, we solve it in the only way we can. By abolishing plenty."¹

The situation is not normal. It is "Alice in Wonderland"; and our task is to move as swiftly and as smoothly as we may through the next inevitable stage of world development.

Private capitalism has had its "glorious" day. In that day changes took place the like of which the world had never seen before and will never see again. William the Conqueror, Julius Caesar, and even Noah, would have been less surprised by the world of Queen Anne than she would have been by the world two centuries after her so recently reported death. Private capitalism, transformed into monopoly capitalism, has already passed late into its night. Many of those who draw its richest prizes will struggle to preserve their merrymaking far into another morning.

¹ I am afraid I do not know who first used these brilliant words.

Meanwhile the rest of us,—tens of millions of us,—what shall we do? Shall we sleep, or try to? Shall we tamely suffer whatever we must suffer to make possible their excesses? Is it not time to wake up and tell them, whether they like it or not, that another day has dawned, and this world shall now move on?

If you still doubt that the world must move on to common ownership, consider one last point. The struggle between common ownership and private ownership is not a two way process, but a one way process. If in any society all the means of production are concentrated in the hands of a few, can you imagine the people arising and saying, "Come, we will own these things in common"? Yes, you can. But if, in any society, all the means of production are owned in common, can you imagine the people saying, "Come now, this is a bad and unreasonable system; let us select a certain privileged few and concentrate all the means of production in them"? No, you cannot.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

Someone perhaps says that I am talking nonsense because in these days there are no unspendable surpluses. On the contrary taxation absorbs almost everything and what is left finds a profitable outlet in the many hundred million loan which is being raised for the war. First of all, I am not talking about Britain only, I am talking about the capitalist world, and in America there are still plenty of unspent and unspendable surpluses vainly seeking investment. But secondly, it is undoubtedly true that anyone or any company with a surplus will in these years

know what to do with it in Britain,—namely, invest it in war. It does not matter from the point of view of employing all the resources of the system whether the investment is actually going to prove profitable. What matters is that the man who makes it should think it is going to be profitable. And the extraordinary thing is that big finance will think it profitable to invest in war. Maybe the investments will be passed on to someone else before people find out that it is not profitable. And of course while all the surpluses are taken in war taxation or dropped happily into war loan in this way, all the resources of our nation will be employed. (At least I am assuming we shall not for much longer witness the degrading spectacle of a nation supposed to be making its maximum war effort with over a million unemployed.) But what a poor advertisement for a system that it can only employ the whole of its resources for purpose of destruction in time of war.

CHAPTER V

LIBERTY

“COMMON ownership—ownership by the state—will abolish political freedom.” This is by far the most important argument advanced against common ownership. And there is so much weight behind it that it must be carefully examined here.¹

What is the fear? If one side owns all the means of expression the other side has no chance. If the state owns all the means of expression the individual has no chance. This is an extremely formidable argument.

If the great issue separating political parties were, for example, whether Ireland should have Home Rule, the argument would be unanswerable. When that question was being argued some poor men thought Ireland should not, some rich men thought Ireland should have Home Rule. Resources for propaganda and for argument were more or less equally divided. It would have been a desperate thing for any government of the day—for example, a government of those who believed Ireland should not have Home Rule—to take into its own hands all the means of expression.

But we are not arguing about Home Rule to-day.

And indeed what do we mean by “all” the means of expression? All except the dumb possess the human voice. The means of expression which really count in a political campaign are those by which the human voice can be magnified, duplicated, and supplemented. These

¹ In a later chapter a number of smaller objections are examined.

unemployed. But grave difficulties will confront us at the outset, and unemployment will not vanish in the first six weeks.

It is not true that every competent working class organiser or platform speaker can automatically walk into a manager's office and run a factory. Many technicians and managers will serve the new society with far more enthusiasm than they ever served the old. But others will not. We shall make hideous mistakes at first. We shall produce too much of one thing and too little of another. All kinds of things will go wrong. There will be, however, this great difference, that we shall be able to learn by our mistakes whereas no amount of learning will enable the present system to overcome its impossibilities.

None the less it is simply asking for trouble to pretend to the workers that the change can be made not merely without effort and sacrifice but with an actual immediate gain in financial income to all of them from the very start.

If this pretence is made, then when the ex-owners and those of the technicians who are on their side begin to sabotage the whole enterprise, the workers will vent their indignation, not on the owners, but on the "Labour" government.

If I am to examine in further detail what might be some of the principle features of a system of common ownership I can only do it in regard to the conditions that may be found in this country and cannot attempt to forecast its detailed application to China, India, Mexico, or Rumania. Moreover, everything suggested must be regarded as nothing more than a suggestion subject to the actual test of experience. Problems which now seem

to require special consideration may automatically solve themselves in practice. Other problems not now foreseen may present themselves for solution. After all in the time of Oliver Cromwell there may have been a man who clearly foresaw that free capitalism would be a better system than feudalism. He would have worked for free capitalism, and urged others to help in the struggle to bring the new economic system into being. Surely no one could reasonably expect him, in his work at that stage, to forecast every precise detail of Modern Company Law, Stock Exchange Practice, Unemployment Relief, and the Society for the Preservation of Rural England.

A preliminary question, concerning only the period of transition, is that of compensation to the present owners of property.

Some say that since work and work alone is the justification for income, the owners should be stripped forthwith of all their property and left to fend for themselves in the labour market like anyone else.

In the first place this doctrine is unwise, for if you preach it literally millions of men and women who own no property of their own at all, will be against you because they will say you are "unfair."

And what is more they will be right. It is quite true that *mere* ownership of property conveys no *right* to an income. Only work conveys that right. It is also true that most of our property is derived from long inheritance or from business transactions which, though not called illegal (or not discovered by the police to be illegal), were in morals nothing less than bare-faced swindling. But as against this, a great deal of property is still even in our days the result of honest work and honest savings.

This property represents in fact crystallised work, and the owners of this property must receive compensation not in respect of their property as such,⁵ but in respect of the work which it represents.

But how can you separate the property which represents work from the property which represents inheritance and swindling?

Before the war I thought this problem insoluble. But now I think we can do rough justice, and if the owners complain that they want exact justice and that we have no right to ask anyone to put up with the rough—then I would reply that the justice I propose for them is a good deal less rough than the justice which sends two men over the top kills one and brings the other back untouched.

I would submit that it is true in general that the smaller properties contain the larger element of crystallised work and the larger properties contain the larger element of inheritance and swindling.

I would therefore submit that it is reasonable to compensate the smallest properties virtually in full, and proceed on a sliding scale until the rate of compensation for the larger properties is very much lower.

Originally I thought that all compensation should be for life and should cease on death. It surely must be correct that all children in the end must start from scratch. Children do not choose their parents, and I do not see why one child should gain because he is the son of a diligent man while another loses merely because his mother had the misfortune to marry a drunkard. This state of affairs however cannot be completely achieved in one generation.

Many men have worked and saved to-day almost wholly in order to be able to provide something for their children. If you take this right away from them, you have taken from them all they have worked for. I would therefore suggest that any owner offered compensation for life should have the alternative of accepting 20% less and extending his compensation to cover his own life and that of his children. Any man who accepted the option would ultimately cost the state far more, but at the beginning he would cost the state 20% less and the first years will be the hardest.

Exact scales of compensation must depend on the extent of our material losses in the War. I would submit the following for consideration as something which might turn out to be possible and reasonable.

<i>Capital Value of Property.</i>	<i>Approximate Annual Income to-day.</i>	<i>Suggested Annual Compensation.</i>	<i>Percentage of present income.</i>
£	£	£	
3,000	100	100	100
7,000	200	180	90
15,000	500	375	75
30,000	1,000	666	66
60,000	2,000	1,000	50
1,000,000	30,000	3,000	10

If anyone says it is monstrous to confiscate 90% of a millionaire's property, I say that £8 4s. 3d. per day is something which ought to enable a man to live quite reasonably well. If any owner asks, "Why should we make any sacrifice at all? Why should not we and our children have every last penny for ever?" I reply that millions of men, owners and non-owners alike, are going to risk their lives in these next months. They make their sacrifice for the common good, that those who are left may live fuller lives. Do I ask sacrifices which are too

much if it is the fact that we cannot build a noble civilisation while the means of production are in private hands only to be used if the owners can make a profit?

Now it will be asked whether it is intended to take over all the means of production, distribution and exchange down to the last wheel stall in the local street market. This could hardly be done on the first day. But ultimately, will any part of our economy be conducted by private individuals running their own little shows, or shall we take over the whole?

To this question I am not prepared to give a positive answer in advance of actual experience.

I cannot say that I am sure there is a permanent place for small scale private enterprise within common ownership; but at this stage I am not prepared to say that there is not.¹ After all to-day a little man under private enter-

¹ It would seem to me quite certain that no one would suggest turning farmers into salaried officials on the first day. The farmers get the worst of every possible world to-day. They buy their produce from monopolies interested only in making money out of farmers. We would substitute state organisations jointly interested with the farmer in producing food at the lowest costs. Farmers sell to a distributive organisation interested in making as much money as it can between the producer and the consumer. We would substitute a state or municipal distributive machine which would pay the producers the best price possible and concentrate on distributing at the lowest possible costs. Most farmers are either the tenants of landlords who do not keep land and buildings in the condition they ought to be, or else they are so bound down by mortgage payments that they cannot adequately improve their land themselves. We would substitute a National Land Owning Commission with all the capital required. Indeed it would seem to me likely that one of the first measures taken against unemployment would be through a large scale endeavour to improve what would have become a common heritage. Naturally from the start there would be initiated large scale experiments in alternative methods of agricultural organisation. I say these experiments would be large-scale and so they would, but for reasons almost wholly connected with our present lack of adequate trained personnel these experiments would at first remain small in comparison with the whole area of the country. Experiments

prise makes concrete posts and garden paving blocks in a society entirely dominated by monopoly capitalism, buying his raw materials, in fact, from two of the most powerful individual monopolies in the land. It seems to me that the same sort of activities might be carried on by private individuals in a society entirely dominated by common ownership. If this were to prove possible, the activities of such men would provide one avenue (not the main avenue, but one avenue) along which new industries destined to be great would first make their way into the world.

In allowing for the possibility of small scale private activity I am not in any way intending to subtract anything from the fundamental fact that the working of the system as a whole would be entirely in the hands of common ownership. I am not compromising in any way with those who would nationalise just a few "key" industries. I cannot agree with those people who say that if we bought up the railways, the mines, and the banks we would be the masters of private enterprise. On the contrary we would be, more than ever, its prisoners.

Labour's Immediate Programme for example proposes the nationalisation, in the first five years, of industries employing one tenth of the insured workers. For those five years, therefore, these industries would have to survive in a world whose condition, as far as boom and slump were concerned, would be entirely dominated by the remaining nine tenths in private hands. In those five years we would be asked to judge by the results and make up

would certainly be made in what is called "factory farming", and also in village community farming. Which form of organisation would ultimately survive would depend entirely on results.

our minds whether to nationalise other industries. We would be asked to consider whether the nationalised industries had "paid" in the accepted sense of the word. It may be taken as fairly certain that in those five test years the owners would take good care—some acting consciously and some unconsciously—that the whole of industry did not pay. Of course, if in those five years the owners wanted to do *something* they would have to come to the Labour government and accept its terms. But the game is far easier than that for the champions of monopoly capitalism. Labour has made a fundamental mistake in assuming that in those vital five years these people would want to go on making money. These men have bigger ideas than that. They would care about nothing in this world in those years except smashing the Labour Government for ever. And the beauty of the situation from their point of view is that in those five years, to achieve their purpose, they would not have to do something, they would merely have to do nothing. They would let their nine tenths of industry run down, and you cannot run the railways the mines and the banks and make them pay while all the industries they serve are slowing down. At no stage would you be able to do the manifestly sensible thing, namely to take the unemployed as a whole and put them to work producing bread and clothes and boots, because that would compete with private enterprise which, by the terms of Labour's election promises, must not be nationalised in the first five years.¹

¹ But on the whole of this subject the reader should make sure of seeing a new book, *Programme for Progressives*, by John Strachey of which I have been privileged to see an advance copy in which he shows how a progressive government armed with an electoral authority insufficient for the immediate introduction of common ownership,

Labour leaders imagine that if all this happened they would be able to "prove" that the owners were deliberately sabotaging, and would thereby rouse up the wrath of the people against them.¹ This is just possible, but it is far more likely that the owners would succeed in rousing up the wrath of the people against the Labour Government—particularly as "the Labour Party is convinced that when it has obtained the support of the majority of the electors for its policy, it will secure the acquiescence of the greater number of its opponents in the changes that will be brought about"² to-day, instead of warning the people that the owners will sabotage any attempt to take economic power from them.

There is no question to my mind then but that the advance to common ownership should be made boldly and not by a series of timid little shuffling steps. This does not so much mean that on the very first day every single industry down to the smallest must be taken over and run exclusively by the state. What it does mean is that from the very first day anyone who finds himself still working on his own account will be regarded as occupying entirely new status.

might yet advance the standards of living of the people and throw the forces of reaction more and more on to the defensive, by a careful understanding of the real economic factors in the situation, and by a courageous leadership not yet shown by our own Labour Party but shown now and then by President Roosevelt.

¹ It is important to remember that it would never be a question of your being able to show that an employer had deliberately refused to execute an order which was offered to him on terms which would allow him to make a profit. Every single employer would say to you, "My dear fellow, I wish I could help, but you see the fact is I haven't had any orders at all of any kind, so what can I do?"

² See The Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, *Labour Party in Perspective*, page 113.

If there were a man privately manufacturing concrete posts and [garden blocks, we should regard that as his way of serving the state. We would in no way regard him as a property owner drawing his income from property. We would not consider him as entitled as of right to draw any income from his property. If the State chose to enter the garden block business or took over his property he would have no claim whatever for compensation *as of right*. In point of fact the State would pay him something as of grace on the lines suggested above for compensation for property taken over at the outset. The state would also be under an obligation to find him employment—and would presumably appoint him as a manager in its garden-block-making industry.

Some would say that no one on earth would conduct business at all if he knew everything might at any time be taken without full compensation. That may be so—we can but try.

“Now please tell us how on earth a typical industry under common ownership will be organised? What bodies will you have, what size will they be, how will they be chosen, what will be their functions?”

If I may say so, this seems to me to be one of the most impossible and one of the most unnecessary questions to answer in advance of actual experience. We know there is no impossibility about it. We know that the State can conduct a large-scale enterprise such as the Post Office, and the Electricity Grid, and the work of the Forestry Commission. If the State purchased all the shares in the railway companies to-day (on any terms you like) there is no reason why all the present men employed in the railways should not go on doing their present jobs

to-morrow. There is therefore no sort of question but that an industry can be organised under common ownership. How the bare skeleton which is called organisation will be adapted and developed under the influence of the spirit of common ownership is a matter which will largely be decided by experience. A few general forecasts, however, can be offered and some of the best-known objections can be answered.

First it is asked how are you going to preserve the spirit of enterprise and the constant urge to higher efficiency which can only be obtained in those who are working on their own property. People who raise this objection talk as if the whole of the people of this country were working on their own property. I suppose the true figure is well under 10%. Already then the overwhelming majority of our people seem to work somehow without the incentives which are peculiarly connected with property owning. In particular I would draw attention to the ever growing number of salaried technicians of all kinds whose devotion to the efficiency of their organisations is well known. Is it really supposed that these men would work with less enthusiasm if they were working for the community as a whole?

Then it is said that the directors of any enterprise under common ownership will certainly become Whitehall-minded and will never take risks or launch out into really big or ambitious developments. As far as big and ambitious developments are concerned surely we can learn something from one glance at some of the tremendous enterprises which have been brought to success in Russia through the labour of men who were, in 1917, ignorant and illiterate peasants with no industrial training or

tradition of any kind. As far as Whitehall-mindedness is concerned, the mind of the servant of the state is very largely what we choose to make it. If we reward the servants who are enterprising, we shall have enterprising servants. If we demand above all painstaking accuracy and dismiss the man who makes a single mistake then we shall have men who are painstakingly accurate and never make mistakes.

But above all the whole taunt of the present capitalists who ask how we will manage our industries without them shows that people have failed to imagine what industry under common ownership will be like. To-day, an owner manages an industry in which the workers work. We are asked how we are going to organise the thing which will manage the industry and tell the workers how to work? It is not going to be like that at all. The industries are going to be the workers' industries and the detailed organisation is not going to be piled on to them from on top, but built up by them from below.

The workers in each productive unit—or their representatives in the larger units—will be meeting every week to consider their work, their condition of work, how they can improve their work themselves, and what improvements might be made in their work with the assistance of other groups of workers. In addition, all the workers in all the trades in any area will be regularly meeting—either directly or again through representatives—to consider what improvements could be made in the industrial possibilities of the entire area. Surely, these meetings supply the answer to those who suggest that there would be no way in which new processes and new techniques and new devices and gadgets of all kinds would

find their way into industry under common ownership. Surely, they answer also those who wonder how the problem of promotion would be solved. Is it unreasonable to suppose that those who showed themselves most effective in the councils of these meetings would be marking themselves out for promotion? Of course some unworthy men would gain promotion by spuriously impressing themselves on their colleagues. But are there really no unworthy promotions to-day?

Something else however can be said about inventions and about promotion. As far as inventions are concerned, a very substantial part of each year's budget would have to be set aside for deliberate state research (so much more effective than competitive research by private industry) and for testing out new ideas in practice. Here at any rate would be a group of civil servants who would not be dismissed if some of their various projects did not pay. The Inventions Board itself might consist of 100 people, and any idea submitted to it would have to be tried out if approved by, say, ten of the Board. Prizes, large and small, would be offered for the best inventions and the best ideas suggested at workers' meetings and submitted to the Board. It is inconceivable that this system would smother as many inventions and new processes as are at present bought up by private enterprise and strangled to prevent their competing with old-fashioned but well-established methods.

As to promotions, it would inevitably be the case that those who showed the most promise at school would continue their education for longer than those who showed less promise, and in the extra time allowed would be very largely educated with a view to their rapidly advancing to

the higher or more technical posts. It is said that the examination technique is not competent to spot incipient merits at the early age of about fifteen. This may be so. No doubt we can improve our technique for spotting merit at an early age. Perhaps our rich men would be more interested in the process if they were not convinced that those of their sons who showed no skill in passing our existing tests could usually be bought or influenced into fairly comfortable positions. None the less we must take account of the talents which often develop later in life, and education under common ownership would certainly include very substantial colleges at which those who had shown special merit in their daily work could take two or three year courses at any age up to, say, forty with a view to their promotion to higher or more technical positions.

Related to the problem of promotion is the problem of saving, for it is asked, how can a man improve his position by thrifty living? If by this is meant how can he by saving buy himself into another class, or how can he by saving purchase personal control over the labour of another man the answer is he will not be able to do either of these things.

It will be realised from what was said in Chapter IV that saving is not quite so important from the point of view of the community as in the days when we had not enough savings to finance all the great developments waiting for us. The State of course would have to "save" as does the Russian State to-day by deciding from time to time what proportion of the available supply of labour shall be devoted to producing food and clothes for to-day's consumption, and what part shall be devoted to producing machinery and power stations and canals and railways

for increasing the consumption of to-morrow. But the individual can be allowed to save for his own greater comfort in the future by making periodic payments which will give him the right to an earlier or a larger pension than the state scheme allowed. He might also purchase an annuity of up to, say, £3 per week for his children. This would be a departure in some measure from the idea that all children should start quite equal, but £3 a week would not lift any child into another class from his fellows, it would give him no control over their economic life, and so long as any part of our present psychology remains with us, there will be some who would work more enthusiastically in order to present this gift to their children. Finally, as far as small scale objections are concerned, one is asked, "What about the slackers?" Well, what about them? You will have slackers in any society however organised. Under common ownership they will receive the smallest rewards. For at least the first century or two it is certain that better work or more skilful or more responsible work will command better pay. But what happens to slackers to-day? They just draw the U.A.B. relief and no one cares about them. It is not anybody's business to fit them for work. No employer would gain by studying their psychological difficulties and gradually building them up as useful citizens. No individual employer loses money because the State has just one extra slacker to support. But as soon as the State is the universal employing authority the State not only has an interest in curing slackers (which it has now), it also has the opportunity of doing so (which now it has not). Slackers need psychological study, not abuse. "Why should I work hard? It just means I'm making more money for the boss,"

is an argument on the slackers' side which it is very hard to answer under our present system. Under common ownership it would disappear. Supposing to-day someone proposed a careful scheme by which a group of incurable slackers should gradually be brought back to useful citizenship, and supposing this scheme might involve their being very well cared for in some camp where they would be gradually introduced to the quite interesting work of, say, timber felling, what would happen? The sincere workers would raise a quite legitimate grievance. "Here we are," they would say, "and here there is work for us to do cutting these trees for good free wages, and now you are taking along these trainees and depriving us of our livelihood." Everyone concerned with our present meagre training efforts knows that this is a legitimate and ultimately unanswerable objection. But under common ownership this cannot arise. The whole community, all the workers, cannot help being better off if their efforts are reinforced by the first meagre assistance of the former shirkers.

This leaves now only the biggest problem of all, namely that of political and individual liberty under common ownership. The problem is a very real one. Notwithstanding the amount of democratic control over working conditions which will exist through the many different forms of workers' meetings, the whole of the economic work will go forward under one central guiding plan. Detailed applications of the plan will be worked out in each industry and each plant, but this does not alter the fact that there will be one plan, and in the last resort, however many thousand individuals and groups may participate in building up the plan, it will be finally sanctioned by one

committee or organisation. There cannot be two or more organisations sanctioning two or more plans. Over this organisation one man will in the last resort preside. Human nature being what it is, we must consider how we can make sure that the political and cultural life of the nation does not fall under the control of this organisation or of its chairman.¹

One important minor point is that not all, but a large proportion of individual promotions must come from below—various groups freely deciding which of their members shall be promoted and the central authority having no power of veto. This assures a man that if he takes a strong line on some controversial subject and convinces his nearest colleagues he will not thereby risk his chances of promotion if his views differ from those of the centre.

This however does not touch the real core of the matter.

I have shown, I hope, that political liberty is in no greater danger under common than under private ownership. But this is not good enough.

We must make sure that our cultural and political

¹ Some people say that a central organisation cannot plan a nation's economic life. If you dispense with the free interplay of the forces of supply and demand it is said that there is no way left of fixing relative values and price levels. This argument might be listened to if we had not already proved it false. To-day the prices of different commodities are not fixed by the free play of economic forces. On the contrary, on the floor of the House of Commons we are endlessly wrangling about the extent to which we shall interfere with these forces and fix prices other than they would determine for such products as coal, shipping freight, beet sugar, cable messages, milk, working-class houses, potatoes, oil-from-coal, aeroplane passenger seats, and a score of other commodities. If we can do this, in an atmosphere in which a dozen different interests are trying to get the prices fixed at levels which will allow them to make handsome profits, surely the same job can be tackled in an atmosphere in which everyone is concerned to promote the general well-being.

liberties cannot be restricted by the man or the men who finally sanction the economic plan.

You can never have 100% denial of liberty or a 100% guarantee of liberty under any system. In the last resort but one, liberty rests in the keeping of the armed forces of the State,—the courts, the police, and the army. *If* those who control these forces take it into their heads to usurp power for themselves; or if they connive at the extra-legal methods of a minority attempting to win power; or if they enforce the laws by which this minority, after becoming a majority, takes away the liberties of all remaining minorities; then they, or the party which they favour, can impose on the people any conditions they choose,¹ however intolerable, provided they are just not so intolerable as to create a spontaneous and leaderless outburst of popular anger so intense as to inspire the people to throw themselves against the machine-guns of the army and the police. This is what I mean by saying that you cannot have 100% denial of liberty as in the last resort of all, power rests in the people.

The question is, therefore, how can we make it as sure as is humanly possible that the army leaders will not choose to usurp power for themselves, and will not be willing to distort the law for the benefit of a minority, or enforce laws passed even by a majority which take away legitimate rights of a minority.

It will be clear at once that no physical means of restraint can be employed against those who have control of the *ultimate* armed force, because, by hypothesis, they are physically more powerful than anyone else. What we have to do is to apply moral safeguards to ensure

¹ This is what has happened in Germany.

that they will not be prepared to use their force against liberty.

I am going to suggest later that there shall be an international armed force, and no other armed forces at all, except local police forces to deal with normal crime. There are no practical difficulties in the way of this at all. There is nothing in the way except a tissue of mental and political cobwebs that could be blown to the four winds of heaven by one breath of collective commonsense.

This force would be the only armed force in any country. Each unit would be moved around from country to country from time to time and could never become the spoilt darling of any particular party or interest. It would be trained with its own esprit de corps, and all its members would be educated from the date of their joining in their duties as the guardians of liberties and of the due processes of laws properly passed according to the constitution.

Now apart from mass rebellion, if the armed forces uphold the "laws" that are in fact made, nothing can preserve liberty if those who make the laws chose to make laws which deny liberty. There is nothing at all to guarantee that our present armed forces "in an emergency" would not uphold laws which even our present government might make,—or uphold an interpretation which they might put on the laws already made,—in such a way as to deprive us of our liberty. And in our present national temper there is not very much, although there is something, to suggest that there would be a spontaneous rebellion against the use of armed forces for these ends.

Therefore if I am asked how *my ideas* could guarantee liberty I must be entitled to assume that at first the government would consist of men who desired to guarantee

liberty and I have to consider how we could prevent the development of psychological processes by which these liberties could come to be snatched away.

Some people,—particularly those who desire to discredit the general ideas expressed in this book,—insist that they lead logically to the conclusion that we should abolish the monarchy. No doubt in a society in which flaunted luxury was unknown any British King would desire to simplify the court ceremonial which many people think appropriate to-day. But our deep respect for a monarchy outside politics is a real national asset which we can use for the preservation of our liberties, and to suggest its abolition in the name of logic is ridiculous.¹

In theory the King has a right to veto any Bill. In practice he is said to have no right to do anything but sign any Bill that is properly passed by a majority in both Houses. Presumably the King would have to sign a Bill passed by both Houses by which the life of the present Parliament were extended for twenty years. Surely he ought not to have to sign such a Bill. On the contrary the King's prerogative should be revived, and it should be not only his right but his duty to refuse his assent to any act which in any way infringed upon or whittled away political liberties. This would mean that any acts, protecting liberty when once passed, could not properly be altered, and, the international armed forces, being educated to uphold the laws properly passed, would respond to an appeal to uphold the existing laws and oppose any attempt to evade them.

We could, therefore, pass laws making it illegal to interfere with anyone for expressing any political opinion,

¹ I am dealing here with the means by which we might preserve liberty in our own country. Other countries would have to make other arrangements.

and conferring on all citizens a permanent right to be registered as voters and to vote by secret ballot in all elections for all government bodies at regular and invariable intervals. We could pass these laws knowing that they would remain permanent.

Our press and our cinemas and our broadcasting would of course be in the hands of the central government. This fact undoubtedly presents us with a grave danger. Our own B.B.C. however has not been so bad. The fact that the Left think it has been too Right, and the Right think it has been too Left, is a fairly good testimonial. It is true of course that during the last twelve months before the war the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary broadcast government propaganda on the vitally important question of foreign affairs over and over again, with no representative of the opposition ever allowed to reply. Furthermore, since the war it has been thought fit to reduce the number of governors from seven to two "for reasons of efficiency"; but it is most noticeable that the five removed include all those who could be suspected of any trace of Anti-Chamberlainism, while the two who remain are two Municheers of unchallengeable amenability.

None the less, a "B.B.C." board of governors is the right technique to ensure that any point of view substantially represented in the country should be guaranteed a place on the more powerful media of expression.

To assist the King in all his duties connected with the preservation of liberty there should be appointed a Council of Liberty. At first one would have to select these men from among those who had been known in these past years for their devoted service to the causes of Liberty, such as members of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

As time went on men should enter for the profession of Councillor of Liberty as they enter for other professions, though they should only be appointed to the Council by one of a great number of organisations,—not including the government,—to whom would be given the right of appointment. These men would be deliberately educated in Liberty from the moment they decided to adopt the profession.

It would be the business of the Councillors to examine into every case in which any citizen complained that the laws had been interpreted against him in an illiberal way. They would advise the King as to whether any new law infringed liberty and ought to be vetoed. Theirs would be the task of calling on the international armed force to act in defence of liberty, and the commander of that force would be forbidden to act in any case except on the proper instructions of the Council. They would also investigate all complaints of all groups and organisations to the effect that they had not been given as much space in the press or as much time on the air or the screen as the number of their supporters warranted, and any other case in which any group or individual alleged that those in charge of the economic plan were denying to them or to him any economic facilities which they reasonably required for the full development of their cultural liberties.

I admit that all this does not give a 100% guarantee of liberty. *If* the King, and the Council of Liberty, and the international armed force, and the government of the day, all decided to let you down, you would be let down, and there would be nothing for it but to rebel. But it does offer a 99% guarantee of liberty which is a great deal more than we have at present.

CHAPTER VIII

INTERNATIONAL ORDER

WHAT kind of international order can we look for in the days when the world is ruled on the principle that we love our neighbours as ourselves?

Before considering this point in detail I would like to address a word of warning to the many friends with whom I have struggled in such happy co-operation for the principles of collective security at a time when these principles, if applied, would have prevented this war.

Many of these people are working with a single-minded devotion at the business of deciding what might be reasonable terms for a peace or armistice if either could be achieved in the conditions of the present day. They are working too to create a public opinion so strong that this government will not be able to impose any other than these reasonable terms.

Have they not had enough experience of the work of trying to create a public opinion so strong that this government will not be able to do some little thing or other on which it has set its mind? Is it not a waste of time to argue at length whether the Austrians should be set unconditionally free as a term of the armistice, or should rather be given an opportunity of deciding their future destiny for themselves after the armistice has been concluded? What do people really mean when they say, as so many are saying to-day,—“We must really get down to some detailed thought and find out just how much of its individual sovereignty each country might be prepared

to sacrifice in order to create a European Federation"? Is this demand for "detailed thought" anything more than an escapist device to avoid the painful necessity of making a large-scale decision here and now? What do these people expect to find out by all their detailed thought? What is the use of trying to find out what conditions might be acceptable, what sacrifices of national sovereignty might be made, in the circumstances of to-day, when the one and only thing that is absolutely certain is that the circumstances in which we shall be called upon to make the peace will be entirely different?

Once again, I plead for big ideas, and if the big ideas say "Yes", let us dismiss minor considerations which might seem to say "Perhaps" or even "No".

Between the years 1913 and 1920 we achieved a revolutionary change in our international thought. In 1913, barring a few people who in the last resort knew that their fine ideals were merely academic, even our most progressive statesmen automatically assumed that nations would fight for their own selfish interests and (perhaps) for the allies to whom they bound themselves in exclusive and often secret alliances. By 1920 the whole of our best thought,—not our academic thought, but our best practical thought,—had adopted an entirely new idea, namely that all nations would make common cause with each other, economically and in the last resort militarily as well, to frustrate any attempted aggression by anyone, even in a part of the world in which they had no immediate economic interests.

Do not let us underestimate the sheer majesty of the change which this represented in our fundamental ideas. I am convinced beyond doubt that we had adopted, in

the Covenant of the League of Nations, a fundamental plan which could have triumphantly succeeded if there had been governments either in Britain or in France resolutely determined that it should succeed. Its success might have led humanity, without major disaster, to a very bright future.

This great plan failed not for small, but for great reasons. It failed first of all because, although it secured the support of almost everyone who was governed by his thought it did not attract the detailed and practical support of the greater numbers who are governed by their feelings. Anyone could always win the support of any audience, except perhaps of the very richest, for the principles of the Covenant by a careful and painstaking speech. But if two men addressed a typical football crowd through a loudspeaker and one said, "Three cheers for international justice !" and the other said, "Three cheers for Malta, Gibraltar, and the British Islands in the Pacific !" there is no doubt which of them would have won the more hearty response. The League failed too because, as Captain Liddell Hart reminded us, it was at all times true of our rulers that their class sympathy and money sense had blinded their strategic sight.

The great and fundamentally new ideas of 1920 having failed, in spite of their immense possibilities for success, is it now worth while to tinker around with them to see how they might be given a second chance of tackling the same problem all over again ? The fight for the League Covenant was a magnificent struggle, and at all times while it might still have succeeded we were overwhelmingly justified in asking humanity to support it. But now that it has failed, let us escape from small ideas and think on the

largest possible lines, and ask ourselves is it reasonable to expect that humanity will be content, after the sacrifices of this war, to set out once again on the same road. Once again it would be a road which might succeed. But humanity would know in advance that it was a road which must lead to disaster if there should be found at the end of it statesmen as ruthless as Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini—and shall I say as unfortunate as Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier. Will humanity direct its steps along this road for the second time even though there be men standing by who will claim to be able to direct them away from some of the little false turnings they took last time? Surely without having to vex our minds with tedious little details we can be absolutely certain that the answer to this question is “No”. Unless there is some large-scale argument which suggests that this is not correct, surely it is not a proper function of the forces of progress to devote their time to argument about how the little false turnings might be avoided if humanity would ever consent to start upon the same road all over again.

We need, in fact, some fundamental idea, or group of ideas, which shall be as completely removed from the ideas of 1920 as the ideas of 1920 were completely removed from the ideas of 1913. Is this right or wrong?

Great numbers of readers will reply, “It is right, and we have this fundamentally new idea. It is called Federal Union!”

If those who are working for Federal Union really intend that there shall be established, forthwith, a central elected government either for the whole world, or for any substantial parts of it, which shall bear the whole responsibility for all those functions of government which all the

member nations have in common—thereby reducing the status of the actual governments of the countries concerned to a status very little different from that of the individual state governments in the United States of America or in the Commonwealth of Australia—then here indeed is an idea vast enough in scale to call for our respect and to make it impossible for anyone to dismiss it in advance as being too small to deserve our consideration. Here is something which, if realised, would be far bigger and better than the League of Nations. But what is happening to this grand idea? Who are supporting it? It surely does give grounds for alarm that so many supporters of Federal Union are not asking themselves. “How can we persuade humanity to accept the whole of our plan?” but are rather asking, “What are the parts of our plan which we can reasonably expect humanity to accept?”

If the progressive forces content themselves with creating propaganda for the sentimental appeal of Federal Union and if the execution of the plan is left, at the end of this war, in the hands of those who have controlled our destinies so far, I venture to make the following forecast of the result.

There will be an international organisation to consider how currencies can be kept stable. There will be an international organisation to consider how to make finance available to countries rebuilding their devastated areas. There will be an international organisation to consider how tariff barriers can be reduced and unusual restrictions removed from the path of “normal” trade. There will be an international organisation—or several different organisations—to consider how “world supply can be adjusted to world demand”. (In other words, to con-

sider how production can be prevented from being so large as to upset profits.) There will be an international organisation to think about colonies. (In other words, a scheme by which European capital will co-operate and not compete in the exploitation of native peoples.) There will be a permanent committee representing the heads of the general staffs of the participating nations to consider matters of common defence against an outsider whose identity will be all too thinly veiled. As to the possibility of disputes within the group, it will be assumed that these will be settled by discussion and no provision will be made for dealing with them otherwise if they are not.

And all our great national leaders will turn round and say to our enthusiastic Federal Unionists, "There you are,—that is Federal Union. Not, of course, the whole thing. But we have to make a beginning. Changes and improvements will be made as time goes on." (Just like those changes in the status quo that were going to be made under Article XIX of the Covenant.)

But what would you have in fact? You would have no Federal Union at all, nor anything like it, nor anything which could develop into it by any possibility. On the contrary, under the name of Federal Union, and by permission of all the sincere minds which have created propaganda in favour of Federal Union, you would have exactly what all the worst elements in our nation have always desired. There would be a smaller "League of Nations", not open to those nations of which the existing members did not approve, militarily directed against Russia, with no prearranged sanctions for restraining aggressive tendencies of members against each other or against outsiders, and the whole thing nicely owned and controlled by the

very biggest men in the biggest of all possible big business worlds.

I beg sincere Federal Unionists to beware, and to demand of their colleagues some guarantee in advance that this is not the destination to which humanity will be led if we create a sentimental and uninstructed desire for Federal Union.

As a matter of fact it all comes back to the large scale idea which was presented in chapter three, and I would beg you not to reject any of the conclusions to which this idea might lead unless you have been able to answer it on its own plane. The fundamental philosophy of "private enterprise" is diametrically opposed to the fundamental philosophy of any workable system based on any form of religious or lay morality. There is no hope now of our building up some paper international superstructure which will give to humanity tranquillity and peace if the whole edifice is founded on a base too contradictory ever to remain stable. So long as you continue to say that it is right and proper for a man to direct the whole of his economic life to the promotion of his own self-interest, the tremendous powers of national and international big business, aiming as they legitimately may under your system at their own self-interest, will neglect and abuse and distort and destroy any organisation, no matter how perfect that organisation might be, even if it were established in a world in which men were only moved by common sense and genuinely disinterested desire to promote the common well-being.

Let us then consider what might be the international organisation of the world without necessarily insisting that every single nation shall have adopted common owner-

ship, but at least on the assumption that common ownership had become as much the general atmosphere of the world (or of the greater part of it) as private ownership is to-day.

Under common ownership no nation, however small, and however thickly populated, could ever be starved by foreign trade. Foreign trade, as a matter of fact, was the only subject on which the classical economists really talked good common sense. They talked common sense because on this one subject they always treated each nation as a homogeneous whole,—in other words they treated it as if the people of each nation owned all things in common. They never said, “If the owners of the Lancashire cotton mills can produce shirts by paying to their workers so and so and if the owners of the American steel works can produce steel by paying to their workers so and so, then such and such results will follow”. On the contrary they always said, “If ‘Britain’ produces shirts for so much, and if ‘America’ produces steel for so much then . . . ” Foreign trade under our existing system has not followed the developments which the classical economists advised as being manifestly the most profitable for one and all simply because they neglected the fact that many developments unprofitable to the general interest might be highly advantageous to the owners of substantial vested interests.

Let us follow then the classical argument in order to show that even in the unlikely event of our being “beaten” in the production of every type and kind of useful commodity, we could still keep our resources fully employed and still benefit by foreign trade. To make the problem seem a little less unreal we might consider what our position

might be as against America if ten years of war had shattered our whole productive forces. In such a situation we might find that the Americans could "beat" us in the production of everything. What do we really mean by "beat" us in the production of everything? We mean that in respect of every conceivable commodity, the Americans can produce a given quantity of it by the expenditure of fewer man-hours of labours than we can. Then can they starve us out? It is so unlikely as to be utterly inconceivable that the advantage which the Americans had over us would be precisely the same (in proportion) in every commodity under the sun. Of course, if this were so, well then, we would produce our commodities with our inefficient machinery and our unproductive fields, and they would produce theirs in their efficient factories and their productive fields, and there would be no trade between us. But we would live and they would live. They would live on a higher standard than we; and we would have to look round for some other nation whose "advantage" over us in the production of some things was greater than its "advantage" in the production of others.¹

The more likely case is that we would find commodities of this kind in large numbers both in America and in Britain. Let us therefore consider a not unlikely pair of commodities, namely oil and motor cars. The Americans can beat us in both. Suppose in America they produce one car for one thousand man-hours of work, and one gallon of petrol for one man-hour of work. Suppose in Britain we can produce one car for two thousand man-hours and can distil from coal one gallon of oil for four

¹ Those who do not desire to follow a calculation may pass to the last paragraph on page 129.

man-hours. Now what happens? The Americans ship, say, 1,500 gallons of oil to Britain. This oil costs them 1,500 man-hours. In Britain it is worth 6,000 man-hours. Therefore we are perfectly willing to give the Americans two cars in exchange, because two cars cost us 4,000 man-hours. When these cars are taken back to America they are worth 2,000 American man-hours, that is to say more than the value of the oil.

By this transaction, the Americans have gained, by the expenditure of 1,500 man-hours, something which without foreign trade would have cost them 2,000 man-hours. We have gained for the expenditure of 4,000 man-hours, something which would otherwise have cost us 6,000 man-hours. Of course we have to reckon in the actual costs of transport which will not be so high as to absorb the whole of the gains of the two nations. We also have to notice that our "profit" in this specimen transaction is 50% while the American profit is 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %. This would mean that in practice we should probably have to throw in a motor cycle as well to square the matter up.

Those who are satisfied by these figures that America could not actually starve us by sending us her goods direct (what a topsy turvy world we are in which can make large numbers of people actually wonder whether this could happen) may still wonder whether the Americans could not "wipe us out" of all foreign markets. She cannot, but the necessary calculation would extend to too many pages if it were not reduced into a semi-mathematical form.

Let us consider three countries: America, Britain, and Cuba, and let us assume that they produce cars, oil and sugar. In the following calculations "mhA" means one

man-hour in America, and "mhB" and "mhC" have similar meanings for Britain and Cuba. The following table shows how many "units" of oil, cars, and sugar can be produced by 100 man-hours in the three different countries.

<i>In America</i>	<i>In Britain</i>	<i>In Cuba</i>
100 mhA—30 oil	100 mhB—8 oil	100 mhC—9 oil
100 mhA—12 car	100 mhB—5 car	100 mhC—6 car
100 mhA—6 sugar	100 mhB—2 sugar	100 mhC—4 sugar

It will be seen that America "beats" Britain and Cuba in everything, and that Britain, in turn, is universally "beaten" even by Cuba. Now can the Americans wipe us out of the Cuban markets or wipe the Cubans out of ours. A little examination will show that the "best" commodities of the three countries are, respectively : America, oil ; Britain, cars ; Cuba, sugar.

Now consider the trade of Cuba.

Cuba sends 4 units of sugar to America. (It is, of course, quite immaterial for the argument what the "unit" may be. It may be a thousand tons, or one ton. All that matters is that it remains constant throughout the argument.)

In America, 4 sugar is worth $66\frac{2}{3}$ mhA which, in its turn, is worth 20 oil. Therefore, the Cubans can purchase (subject of course to transport charges both ways) 20 oil for 4 sugar in America.

If, on the other hand, Cuba sends 4 sugar to Britain, in Britain 4 sugar is worth 200 mhB which, in its turn, is worth 16 oil. Therefore, the Cubans can purchase 16 oil for 4 sugar in Britain.

It is, therefore, much more profitable for the Cubans to take their oil from America, and as far as oil is concerned

unemployed. But grave difficulties will confront us at the outset, and unemployment will not vanish in the first six weeks.

It is not true that every competent working class organiser or platform speaker can automatically walk into a manager's office and run a factory. Many technicians and managers will serve the new society with far more enthusiasm than they ever served the old. But others will not. We shall make hideous mistakes at first. We shall produce too much of one thing and too little of another. All kinds of things will go wrong. There will be, however, this great difference, that we shall be able to learn by our mistakes whereas no amount of learning will enable the present system to overcome its impossibilities.

None the less it is simply asking for trouble to pretend to the workers that the change can be made not merely without effort and sacrifice but with an actual immediate gain in financial income to all of them from the very start.

If this pretence is made, then when the ex-owners and those of the technicians who are on their side begin to sabotage the whole enterprise, the workers will vent their indignation, not on the owners, but on the "Labour" government.

If I am to examine in further detail what might be some of the principle features of a system of common ownership I can only do it in regard to the conditions that may be found in this country and cannot attempt to forecast its detailed application to China, India, Mexico, or Rumania. Moreover, everything suggested must be regarded as nothing more than a suggestion subject to the actual test of experience. Problems which now seem

to require special consideration may automatically solve themselves in practice. Other problems not now foreseen may present themselves for solution. After all in the time of Oliver Cromwell there may have been a man who clearly foresaw that free capitalism would be a better system than feudalism. He would have worked for free capitalism, and urged others to help in the struggle to bring the new economic system into being. Surely no one could reasonably expect him, in his work at that stage, to forecast every precise detail of Modern Company Law, Stock Exchange Practice, Unemployment Relief, and the Society for the Preservation of Rural England.

A preliminary question, concerning only the period of transition, is that of compensation to the present owners of property.

Some say that since work and work alone is the justification for income, the owners should be stripped forthwith of all their property and left to fend for themselves in the labour market like anyone else.

In the first place this doctrine is unwise, for if you preach it literally millions of men and women who own no property of their own at all, will be against you because they will say you are "unfair."

And what is more they will be right. It is quite true that *mere* ownership of property conveys no *right* to an income. Only work conveys that right. It is also true that most of our property is derived from long inheritance or from business transactions which, though not called illegal (or not discovered by the police to be illegal), were in morals nothing less than bare-faced swindling. But as against this, a great deal of property is still even in our days the result of honest work and honest savings.

This property represents in fact crystallised work, and the owners of this property must receive compensation not in respect of their property as such, but in respect of the work which it represents.

But how can you separate the property which represents work from the property which represents inheritance and swindling?

Before the war I thought this problem insoluble. But now I think we can do rough justice, and if the owners complain that they want exact justice and that we have no right to ask anyone to put up with the rough—then I would reply that the justice I propose for them is a good deal less rough than the justice which sends two men over the top kills one and brings the other back untouched.

I would submit that it is true in general that the smaller properties contain the larger element of crystallised work and the larger properties contain the larger element of inheritance and swindling.

I would therefore submit that it is reasonable to compensate the smallest properties virtually in full, and proceed on a sliding scale until the rate of compensation for the larger properties is very much lower.

Originally I thought that all compensation should be for life and should cease on death. It surely must be correct that all children in the end must start from scratch. Children do not choose their parents, and I do not see why one child should gain because he is the son of a diligent man while another loses merely because his mother had the misfortune to marry a drunkard. This state of affairs however cannot be completely achieved in one generation.

Many men have worked and saved to-day almost wholly in order to be able to provide something for their children. If you take this right away from them, you have taken from them all they have worked for. I would therefore suggest that any owner offered compensation for life should have the alternative of accepting 20% less and extending his compensation to cover his own life and that of his children. Any man who accepted the option would ultimately cost the state far more, but at the beginning he would cost the state 20% less and the first years will be the hardest.

Exact scales of compensation must depend on the extent of our material losses in the War. I would submit the following for consideration as something which might turn out to be possible and reasonable.

<i>Capital Value of Property.</i>	<i>Approximate Annual Income to-day.</i>	<i>Suggested Annual Compensation.</i>	<i>Percentage of present income.</i>
£	£	£	
3,000	100	100	100
7,000	200	180	90
15,000	500	375	75
30,000	1,000	666	66
60,000	2,000	1,000	50
1,000,000	30,000	3,000	10

If anyone says it is monstrous to confiscate 90% of a millionaire's property, I say that £8 4s. 3d. per day is something which ought to enable a man to live quite reasonably well. If any owner asks, "Why should we make any sacrifice at all? Why should not we and our children have every last penny for ever?" I reply that millions of men, owners and non-owners alike, are going to risk their lives in these next months. They make their sacrifice for the common good, that those who are left may live fuller lives. Do I ask sacrifices which are too

much if it is the fact that we cannot build a noble civilisation while the means of production are in private hands only to be used if the owners can make a profit?

Now it will be asked whether it is intended to take over all the means of production, distribution and exchange down to the last wheel stall in the local street market. This could hardly be done on the first day. But ultimately, will any part of our economy be conducted by private individuals running their own little shows, or shall we take over the whole?

To this question I am not prepared to give a positive answer in advance of actual experience.

I cannot say that I am sure there is a permanent place for small scale private enterprise within common ownership; but at this stage I am not prepared to say that there is not.¹ After all to-day a little man under private enter-

¹ It would seem to me quite certain that no one would suggest turning farmers into salaried officials on the first day. The farmers get the worst of every possible world to-day. They buy their produce from monopolies interested only in making money out of farmers. We would substitute state organisations jointly interested with the farmer in producing food at the lowest costs. Farmers sell to a distributive organisation interested in making as much money as it can between the producer and the consumer. We would substitute a state or municipal distributive machine which would pay the producers the best price possible and concentrate on distributing at the lowest possible costs. Most farmers are either the tenants of landlords who do not keep land and buildings in the condition they ought to be, or else they are so bound down by mortgage payments that they cannot adequately improve their land themselves. We would substitute a National Land Owning Commission with all the capital required. Indeed it would seem to me likely that one of the first measures taken against unemployment would be through a large scale endeavour to improve what would have become a common heritage. Naturally from the start there would be initiated large scale experiments in alternative methods of agricultural organisation. I say these experiments would be large-scale and so they would, but for reasons almost wholly connected with our present lack of adequate trained personnel these experiments would at first remain small in comparison with the whole area of the country. Experiments

prise makes concrete posts and garden paving blocks in a society entirely dominated by monopoly capitalism, buying his raw materials, in fact, from two of the most powerful individual monopolies in the land. It seems to me that the same sort of activities might be carried on by private individuals in a society entirely dominated by common ownership. If this were to prove possible, the activities of such men would provide one avenue (not the main avenue, but one avenue) along which new industries destined to be great would first make their way into the world.

In allowing for the possibility of small scale private activity I am not in any way intending to subtract anything from the fundamental fact that the working of the system as a whole would be entirely in the hands of common ownership. I am not compromising in any way with those who would nationalise just a few "key" industries. I cannot agree with those people who say that if we bought up the railways, the mines, and the banks we would be the masters of private enterprise. On the contrary we would be, more than ever, its prisoners.

Labour's Immediate Programme for example proposes the nationalisation, in the first five years, of industries employing one tenth of the insured workers. For those five years, therefore, these industries would have to survive in a world whose condition, as far as boom and slump were concerned, would be entirely dominated by the remaining nine tenths in private hands. In those five years we would be asked to judge by the results and make up

would certainly be made in what is called "factory farming", and also in village community farming. Which form of organisation would ultimately survive would depend entirely on results.

our minds whether to nationalise other industries. We would be asked to consider whether the nationalised industries had "paid" in the accepted sense of the word. It may be taken as fairly certain that in those five test years the owners would take good care—some acting consciously and some unconsciously—that the whole of industry did not pay. Of course, if in those five years the owners wanted to do *something* they would have to come to the Labour government and accept its terms. But the game is far easier than that for the champions of monopoly capitalism. Labour has made a fundamental mistake in assuming that in those vital five years these people would want to go on making money. These men have bigger ideas than that. They would care about nothing in this world in those years except smashing the Labour Government for ever. And the beauty of the situation from their point of view is that in those five years, to achieve their purpose, they would not have to do something, they would merely have to do nothing. They would let their nine tenths of industry run down, and you cannot run the railways the mines and the banks and make them pay while all the industries they serve are slowing down. At no stage would you be able to do the manifestly sensible thing, namely to take the unemployed as a whole and put them to work producing bread and clothes and boots, because that would compete with private enterprise which, by the terms of Labour's election promises, must not be nationalised in the first five years.¹

¹ But on the whole of this subject the reader should make sure of seeing a new book, *Programme for Progressives*, by John Strachey of which I have been privileged to see an advance copy in which he shows how a progressive government armed with an electoral authority insufficient for the immediate introduction of common ownership,

Labour leaders imagine that if all this happened they would be able to "prove" that the owners were deliberately sabotaging, and would thereby rouse up the wrath of the people against them.¹ This is just possible, but it is far more likely that the owners would succeed in rousing up the wrath of the people against the Labour Government—particularly as "the Labour Party is convinced that when it has obtained the support of the majority of the electors for its policy, it will secure the acquiescence of the greater number of its opponents in the changes that will be brought about"² to-day, instead of warning the people that the owners will sabotage any attempt to take economic power from them.

There is no question to my mind then but that the advance to common ownership should be made boldly and not by a series of timid little shuffling steps. This does not so much mean that on the very first day every single industry down to the smallest must be taken over and run exclusively by the state. What it does mean is that from the very first day anyone who finds himself still working on his own account will be regarded as occupying entirely new status.

might yet advance the standards of living of the people and throw the forces of reaction more and more on to the defensive, by a careful understanding of the real economic factors in the situation, and by a courageous leadership not yet shown by our own Labour Party but shown now and then by President Roosevelt.

¹ It is important to remember that it would never be a question of your being able to show that an employer had deliberately refused to execute an order which was offered to him on terms which would allow him to make a profit. Every single employer would say to you, "My dear fellow, I wish I could help, but you see the fact is I haven't had any orders at all of any kind, so what can I do?"

² See The Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, *Labour Party in Perspective*, page 113.

If there were a man privately manufacturing concrete posts and garden blocks, we should regard that as his way of serving the state. We would in no way regard him as a property owner drawing his income from property. We would not consider him as entitled as of right to draw any income from his property. If the State chose to enter the garden block business or took over his property he would have no claim whatever for compensation *as of right*. In point of fact the State would pay him something as of grace on the lines suggested above for compensation for property taken over at the outset. The state would also be under an obligation to find him employment—and would presumably appoint him as a manager in its garden-block-making industry.

Some would say that no one on earth would conduct business at all if he knew everything might at any time be taken without full compensation. That may be so—we can but try.

“Now please tell us how on earth a typical industry under common ownership will be organised? What bodies will you have, what size will they be, how will they be chosen, what will be their functions?”

If I may say so, this seems to me to be one of the most impossible and one of the most unnecessary questions to answer in advance of actual experience. We know there is no impossibility about it. We know that the State **can** conduct a large-scale enterprise such as the Post Office, and the Electricity Grid, and the work of the Forestry Commission. If the State purchased all the shares in the railway companies to-day (on any terms you like) there is no reason why all the present men employed in the railways should not go on doing their present jobs

to-morrow. There is therefore no sort of question but that an industry can be organised under common ownership. How the bare skeleton which is called organisation will be adapted and developed under the influence of the spirit of common ownership is a matter which will largely be decided by experience. A few general forecasts, however, can be offered and some of the best-known objections can be answered.

First it is asked how are you going to preserve the spirit of enterprise and the constant urge to higher efficiency which can only be obtained in those who are working on their own property. People who raise this objection talk as if the whole of the people of this country were working on their own property. I suppose the true figure is well under 10%. Already then the overwhelming majority of our people seem to work somehow without the incentives which are peculiarly connected with property owning. In particular I would draw attention to the ever growing number of salaried technicians of all kinds whose devotion to the efficiency of their organisations is well known. Is it really supposed that these men would work with less enthusiasm if they were working for the community as a whole ?

Then it is said that the directors of any enterprise under common ownership will certainly become Whitehall-minded and will never take risks or launch out into really big or ambitious developments. As far as big and ambitious developments are concerned surely we can learn something from one glance at some of the tremendous enterprises which have been brought to success in Russia through the labour of men who were, in 1917, ignorant and illiterate peasants with no industrial training or

tradition of any kind. As far as Whitehall-mindedness is concerned, the mind of the servant of the state is very largely what we choose to make it. If we reward the servants who are enterprising, we shall have enterprising servants. If we demand above all painstaking accuracy and dismiss the man who makes a single mistake then we shall have men who are painstakingly accurate and never make mistakes.

But above all the whole taunt of the present capitalists who ask how we will manage our industries without them shows that people have failed to imagine what industry under common ownership will be like. To-day, an owner manages an industry in which the workers work. We are asked how we are going to organise the thing which will manage the industry and tell the workers how to work? It is not going to be like that at all. The industries are going to be the workers' industries and the detailed organisation is not going to be piled on to them from on top, but built up by them from below.

The workers in each productive unit—or their representatives in the larger units—will be meeting every week to consider their work, their condition of work, how they can improve their work themselves, and what improvements might be made in their work with the assistance of other groups of workers. In addition, all the workers in all the trades in any area will be regularly meeting—either directly or again through representatives—to consider what improvements could be made in the industrial possibilities of the entire area. Surely, these meetings supply the answer to those who suggest that there would be no way in which new processes and new techniques and new devices and gadgets of all kinds would

find their way into industry under common ownership. Surely, they answer also those who wonder how the problem of promotion would be solved. Is it unreasonable to suppose that those who showed themselves most effective in the councils of these meetings would be marking themselves out for promotion? Of course some unworthy men would gain promotion by spuriously impressing themselves on their colleagues. But are there really no unworthy promotions to-day?

Something else however can be said about inventions and about promotion. As far as inventions are concerned, a very substantial part of each year's budget would have to be set aside for deliberate state research (so much more effective than competitive research by private industry) and for testing out new ideas in practice. Here at any rate would be a group of civil servants who would not be dismissed if some of their various projects did not pay. The Inventions Board itself might consist of 100 people, and any idea submitted to it would have to be tried out if approved by, say, ten of the Board. Prizes, large and small, would be offered for the best inventions and the best ideas suggested at workers' meetings and submitted to the Board. It is inconceivable that this system would smother as many inventions and new processes as are at present bought up by private enterprise and strangled to prevent their competing with old-fashioned but well-established methods.

As to promotions, it would inevitably be the case that those who showed the most promise at school would continue their education for longer than those who showed less promise, and in the extra time allowed would be very largely educated with a view to their rapidly advancing to

the higher or more technical posts. It is said that the examination technique is not competent to spot incipient merits at the early age of about fifteen. This may be so. No doubt we can improve our technique for spotting merit at an early age. Perhaps our rich men would be more interested in the process if they were not convinced that those of their sons who showed no skill in passing our existing tests could usually be bought or influenced into fairly comfortable positions. None the less we must take account of the talents which often develop later in life, and education under common ownership would certainly include very substantial colleges at which those who had shown special merit in their daily work could take two or three year courses at any age up to, say, forty with a view to their promotion to higher or more technical positions.

Related to the problem of promotion is the problem of saving, for it is asked, how can a man improve his position by thrifty living? If by this is meant how can he by saving buy himself into another class, or how can he by saving purchase personal control over the labour of another man the answer is he will not be able to do either of these things.

It will be realised from what was said in Chapter IV that saving is not quite so important from the point of view of the community as in the days when we had not enough savings to finance all the great developments waiting for us. The State of course would have to "save" as does the Russian State to-day by deciding from time to time what proportion of the available supply of labour shall be devoted to producing food and clothes for to-day's consumption, and what part shall be devoted to producing machinery and power stations and canals and railways

for increasing the consumption of to-morrow. But the individual can be allowed to save for his own greater comfort in the future by making periodic payments which will give him the right to an earlier or a larger pension than the state scheme allowed. He might also purchase an annuity of up to, say, £3 per week for his children. This would be a departure in some measure from the idea that all children should start quite equal, but £3 a week would not lift any child into another class from his fellows, it would give him no control over their economic life, and so long as any part of our present psychology remains with us, there will be some who would work more enthusiastically in order to present this gift to their children. Finally, as far as small scale objections are concerned, one is asked, "What about the slackers?" Well, what about them? You will have slackers in any society however organised. Under common ownership they will receive the smallest rewards. For at least the first century or two it is certain that better work or more skilful or more responsible work will command better pay. But what happens to slackers to-day? They just draw the U.A.B. relief and no one cares about them. It is not anybody's business to fit them for work. No employer would gain by studying their psychological difficulties and gradually building them up as useful citizens. No individual employer loses money because the State has just one extra slacker to support. But as soon as the State is the universal employing authority the State not only has an interest in curing slackers (which it has now), it also has the opportunity of doing so (which now it has not). Slackers need psychological study, not abuse. "Why should I work hard? It just means I'm making more money for the boss,"

is an argument on the slackers' side which it is very hard to answer under our present system. Under common ownership it would disappear. Supposing to-day someone proposed a careful scheme by which a group of incurable slackers should gradually be brought back to useful citizenship, and supposing this scheme might involve their being very well cared for in some camp where they would be gradually introduced to the quite interesting work of, say, timber felling, what would happen? The sincere workers would raise a quite legitimate grievance. "Here we are," they would say, "and here there is work for us to do cutting these trees for good free wages, and now you are taking along these trainees and depriving us of our livelihood." Everyone concerned with our present meagre training efforts knows that this is a legitimate and ultimately unanswerable objection. But under common ownership this cannot arise. The whole community, all the workers, cannot help being better off if their efforts are reinforced by the first meagre assistance of the former shirkers.

This leaves now only the biggest problem of all, namely that of political and individual liberty under common ownership. The problem is a very real one. Notwithstanding the amount of democratic control over working conditions which will exist through the many different forms of workers' meetings, the whole of the economic work will go forward under one central guiding plan. Detailed applications of the plan will be worked out in each industry and each plant, but this does not alter the fact that there will be one plan, and in the last resort, however many thousand individuals and groups may participate in building up the plan, it will be finally sanctioned by one

committee or organisation. There cannot be two or more organisations sanctioning two or more plans. Over this organisation one man will in the last resort preside. Human nature being what it is, we must consider how we can make sure that the political and cultural life of the nation does not fall under the control of this organisation or of its chairman.¹

One important minor point is that not all, but a large proportion of individual promotions must come from below—various groups freely deciding which of their members shall be promoted and the central authority having no power of veto. This assures a man that if he takes a strong line on some controversial subject and convinces his nearest colleagues he will not thereby risk his chances of promotion if his views differ from those of the centre.

This however does not touch the real core of the matter.

I have shown, I hope, that political liberty is in no greater danger under common than under private ownership. But this is not good enough.

We must make sure that our cultural and political

¹ Some people say that a central organisation cannot plan a nation's economic life. If you dispense with the free interplay of the forces of supply and demand it is said that there is no way left of fixing relative values and price levels. This argument might be listened to if we had not already proved it false. To-day the prices of different commodities are not fixed by the free play of economic forces. On the contrary, on the floor of the House of Commons we are endlessly wrangling about the extent to which we shall interfere with these forces and fix prices other than they would determine for such products as coal, shipping freight, beet sugar, cable messages, milk, working-class houses, potatoes, oil-from-coal, aeroplane passenger seats, and a score of other commodities. If we can do this, in an atmosphere in which a dozen different interests are trying to get the prices fixed at levels which will allow them to make handsome profits, surely the same job can be tackled in an atmosphere in which everyone is concerned to promote the general well-being.

liberties cannot be restricted by the man or the men who finally sanction the economic plan.

You can never have 100% denial of liberty or a 100% guarantee of liberty under any system. In the last resort but one, liberty rests in the keeping of the armed forces of the State,—the courts, the police, and the army. *If* those who control these forces take it into their heads to usurp power for themselves; or if they connive at the extra-legal methods of a minority attempting to win power; or if they enforce the laws by which this minority, after becoming a majority, takes away the liberties of all remaining minorities; then they, or the party which they favour, can impose on the people any conditions they choose,¹ however intolerable, provided they are just not so intolerable as to create a spontaneous and leaderless outburst of popular anger so intense as to inspire the people to throw themselves against the machine-guns of the army and the police. This is what I mean by saying that you cannot have 100% denial of liberty as in the last resort of all, power rests in the people.

The question is, therefore, how can we make it as sure as is humanly possible that the army leaders will not choose to usurp power for themselves, and will not be willing to distort the law for the benefit of a minority, or enforce laws passed even by a majority which take away legitimate rights of a minority.

It will be clear at once that no physical means of restraint can be employed against those who have control of the *ultimate* armed force, because, by hypothesis, they are physically more powerful than anyone else. What we have to do is to apply moral safeguards to ensure

¹ This is what has happened in Germany.

that they will not be prepared to use their force against liberty.

I am going to suggest later that there shall be an international armed force, and no other armed forces at all, except local police forces to deal with normal crime. There are no practical difficulties in the way of this at all. There is nothing in the way except a tissue of mental and political cobwebs that could be blown to the four winds of heaven by one breath of collective commonsense.

This force would be the only armed force in any country. Each unit would be moved around from country to country from time to time and could never become the spoilt darling of any particular party or interest. It would be trained with its own esprit de corps, and all its members would be educated from the date of their joining in their duties as the guardians of liberties and of the due processes of laws properly passed according to the constitution.

Now apart from mass rebellion, if the armed forces uphold the "laws" that are in fact made, nothing can preserve liberty if those who make the laws chose to make laws which deny liberty. There is nothing at all to guarantee that our present armed forces "in an emergency" would not uphold laws which even our present government might make,—or uphold an interpretation which they might put on the laws already made,—in such a way as to deprive us of our liberty. And in our present national temper there is not very much, although there is something, to suggest that there would be a spontaneous rebellion against the use of armed forces for these ends.

Therefore if I am asked how *my ideas* could guarantee liberty I must be entitled to assume that at first the government would consist of men who desired to guarantee

liberty and I have to consider how we could prevent the development of psychological processes by which these liberties could come to be snatched away.

Some people,—particularly those who desire to discredit the general ideas expressed in this book,—insist that they lead logically to the conclusion that we should abolish the monarchy. No doubt in a society in which flaunted luxury was unknown any British King would desire to simplify the court ceremonial which many people think appropriate to-day. But our deep respect for a monarchy outside politics is a real national asset which we can use for the preservation of our liberties, and to suggest its abolition in the name of logic is ridiculous.¹

In theory the King has a right to veto any Bill. In practice he is said to have no right to do anything but sign any Bill that is properly passed by a majority in both Houses. Presumably the King would have to sign a Bill passed by both Houses by which the life of the present Parliament were extended for twenty years. Surely he ought not to have to sign such a Bill. On the contrary the King's prerogative should be revived, and it should be not only his right but his duty to refuse his assent to any act which in any way infringed upon or whittled away political liberties. This would mean that any acts, protecting liberty when once passed, could not properly be altered, and, the international armed forces, being educated to uphold the laws properly passed, would respond to an appeal to uphold the existing laws and oppose any attempt to evade them.

We could, therefore, pass laws making it illegal to interfere with anyone for expressing any political opinion,

¹ I am dealing here with the means by which we might preserve liberty in our own country. Other countries would have to make other arrangements.

and conferring on all citizens a permanent right to be registered as voters and to vote by secret ballot in all elections for all government bodies at regular and invariable intervals. We could pass these laws knowing that they would remain permanent.

Our press and our cinemas and our broadcasting would of course be in the hands of the central government. This fact undoubtedly presents us with a grave danger. Our own B.B.C., however has not been so bad. The fact that the Left think it has been too Right, and the Right think it has been too Left, is a fairly good testimonial. It is true of course that during the last twelve months before the war the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary broadcast government propaganda on the vitally important question of foreign affairs over and over again, with no representative of the opposition ever allowed to reply. Furthermore, since the war it has been thought fit to reduce the number of governors from seven to two "for reasons of efficiency"; but it is most noticeable that the five removed include all those who could be suspected of any trace of Anti-Chamberlainism, while the two who remain are two Munichers of unchallengeable amenability.

None the less, a "B.B.C." board of governors is the right technique to ensure that any point of view substantially represented in the country should be guaranteed a place on the more powerful media of expression.

To assist the King in all his duties connected with the preservation of liberty there should be appointed a Council of Liberty. At first one would have to select these men from among those who had been known in these past years for their devoted service to the causes of Liberty, such as members of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

As time went on men should enter for the profession of Councillor of Liberty as they enter for other professions, though they should only be appointed to the Council by one of a great number of organisations,—not including the government,—to whom would be given the right of appointment. These men would be deliberately educated in Liberty from the moment they decided to adopt the profession.

It would be the business of the Councillors to examine into every case in which any citizen complained that the laws had been interpreted against him in an illiberal way. They would advise the King as to whether any new law infringed liberty and ought to be vetoed. Theirs would be the task of calling on the international armed force to act in defence of liberty, and the commander of that force would be forbidden to act in any case except on the proper instructions of the Council. They would also investigate all complaints of all groups and organisations to the effect that they had not been given as much space in the press or as much time on the air or the screen as the number of their supporters warranted, and any other case in which any group or individual alleged that those in charge of the economic plan were denying to them or to him any economic facilities which they reasonably required for the full development of their cultural liberties.

I admit that all this does not give a 100% guarantee of liberty. If the King, and the Council of Liberty, and the international armed force, and the government of the day, all decided to let you down, you would be let down, and there would be nothing for it but to rebel. But it does offer a 99% guarantee of liberty which is a great deal more than we have at present.

CHAPTER VIII

INTERNATIONAL ORDER

WHAT kind of international order can we look for in the days when the world is ruled on the principle that we love our neighbours as ourselves?

Before considering this point in detail I would like to address a word of warning to the many friends with whom I have struggled in such happy co-operation for the principles of collective security at a time when these principles, if applied, would have prevented this war.

Many of these people are working with a single-minded devotion at the business of deciding what might be reasonable terms for a peace or armistice if either could be achieved in the conditions of the present day. They are working too to create a public opinion so strong that this government will not be able to impose any other than these reasonable terms.

Have they not had enough experience of the work of trying to create a public opinion so strong that this government will not be able to do some little thing or other on which it has set its mind? Is it not a waste of time to argue at length whether the Austrians should be set unconditionally free as a term of the armistice, or should rather be given an opportunity of deciding their future destiny for themselves after the armistice has been concluded? What do people really mean when they say, as so many are saying to-day,—“We must really get down to some detailed thought and find out just how much of its individual sovereignty each country might be prepared

to sacrifice in order to create a European Federation"? Is this demand for "detailed thought" anything more than an escapist device to avoid the painful necessity of making a large-scale decision here and now? What do these people expect to find out by all their detailed thought? What is the use of trying to find out what conditions might be acceptable, what sacrifices of national sovereignty might be made, in the circumstances of to-day, when the one and only thing that is absolutely certain is that the circumstances in which we shall be called upon to make the peace will be entirely different?

Once again, I plead for big ideas, and if the big ideas say "Yes", let us dismiss minor considerations which might seem to say "Perhaps" or even "No".

Between the years 1913 and 1920 we achieved a revolutionary change in our international thought. In 1913, barring a few people who in the last resort knew that their fine ideals were merely academic, even our most progressive statesmen automatically assumed that nations would fight for their own selfish interests and (perhaps) for the allies to whom they bound themselves in exclusive and often secret alliances. By 1920 the whole of our best thought,—not our academic thought, but our best practical thought,—had adopted an entirely new idea, namely that all nations would make common cause with each other, economically and in the last resort militarily as well, to frustrate any attempted aggression by anyone even in a part of the world in which they had no immediate economic interests.

Do not let us underestimate the sheer majesty of the change which this represented in our fundamental ideas. I am convinced beyond doubt that we had adopted, in

the Covenant of the League of Nations, a fundamental plan which could have triumphantly succeeded if there had been governments either in Britain or in France resolutely determined that it should succeed. Its success might have led humanity, without major disaster, to a very bright future.

This great plan failed not for small, but for great reasons. It failed first of all because, although it secured the support of almost everyone who was governed by his thought it did not attract the detailed and practical support of the greater numbers who are governed by their feelings. Anyone could always win the support of any audience, except perhaps of the very richest, for the principles of the Covenant by a careful and painstaking speech. But if two men addressed a typical football crowd through a loudspeaker and one said, "Three cheers for international justice!" and the other said, "Three cheers for Malta, Gibraltar, and the British Islands in the Pacific!" there is no doubt which of them would have won the more hearty response. The League failed too because, as Captain Liddell Hart reminded us, it was at all times true of our rulers that their class sympathy and money sense had blinded their strategic sight.

The great and fundamentally new ideas of 1920 having failed, in spite of their immense possibilities for success, is it now worth while to tinker around with them to see how they might be given a second chance of tackling the same problem all over again? The fight for the League Covenant was a magnificent struggle, and at all times while it might still have succeeded we were overwhelmingly justified in asking humanity to support it. But now that it has failed, let us escape from small ideas and think on the

largest possible lines, and ask ourselves is it reasonable to expect that humanity will be content, after the sacrifices of this war, to set out once again on the same road. Once again it would be a road which might succeed. But humanity would know in advance that it was a road which must lead to disaster if there should be found at the end of it statesmen as ruthless as Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini—and shall I say as unfortunate as Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier. Will humanity direct its steps along this road for the second time even though there be men standing by who will claim to be able to direct them away from some of the little false turnings they took last time? Surely without having to vex our minds with tedious little details we can be absolutely certain that the answer to this question is “No”. Unless there is some large-scale argument which suggests that this is not correct, surely it is not a proper function of the forces of progress to devote their time to argument about how the little false turnings might be avoided if humanity would ever consent to start upon the same road all over again.

We need, in fact, some fundamental idea, or group of ideas, which shall be as completely removed from the ideas of 1920 as the ideas of 1920 were completely removed from the ideas of 1913. Is this right or wrong?

Great numbers of readers will reply, “It is right, and we have this fundamentally new idea. It is called Federal Union!”

If those who are working for Federal Union really intend that there shall be established, forthwith, a central elected government either for the whole world, or for any substantial parts of it, which shall bear the whole responsibility for all those functions of government which all the

member nations have in common—thereby reducing the status of the actual governments of the countries concerned to a status very little different from that of the individual state governments in the United States of America or in the Commonwealth of Australia—then here indeed is an idea vast enough in scale to call for our respect and to make it impossible for anyone to dismiss it in advance as being too small to deserve our consideration. Here is something which, if realised, would be far bigger and better than the League of Nations. But what is happening to this grand idea? Who are supporting it? It surely does give grounds for alarm that so many supporters of Federal Union are not asking themselves. "How can we persuade humanity to accept the whole of our plan?" but are rather asking, "What are the parts of our plan which we can reasonably expect humanity to accept?"

If the progressive forces content themselves with creating propaganda for the sentimental appeal of Federal Union and if the execution of the plan is left, at the end of this war, in the hands of those who have controlled our destinies so far, I venture to make the following forecast of the result.

There will be an international organisation to consider how currencies can be kept stable. There will be an international organisation to consider how to make finance available to countries rebuilding their devastated areas. There will be an international organisation to consider how tariff barriers can be reduced and unusual restrictions removed from the path of "normal" trade. There will be an international organisation—or several different organisations—to consider how "world supply can be adjusted to world demand". (In other words, to con-

sider how production can be prevented from being so large as to upset profits.) There will be an international organisation to think about colonies. (In other words, a scheme by which European capital will co-operate and not compete in the exploitation of native peoples.) There will be a permanent committee representing the heads of the general staffs of the participating nations to consider matters of common defence against an outsider whose identity will be all too thinly veiled. As to the possibility of disputes within the group, it will be assumed that these will be settled by discussion and no provision will be made for dealing with them otherwise if they are not.

And all our great national leaders will turn round and say to our enthusiastic Federal Unionists, "There you are,—that is Federal Union. Not, of course, the whole thing. But we have to make a beginning. Changes and improvements will be made as time goes on." (Just like those changes in the status quo that were going to be made under Article XIX of the Covenant.)

But what would you have in fact? You would have no Federal Union at all, nor anything like it, nor anything which could develop into it by any possibility. On the contrary, under the name of Federal Union, and by permission of all the sincere minds which have created propaganda in favour of Federal Union, you would have exactly what all the worst elements in our nation have always desired. There would be a smaller "League of Nations", not open to those nations of which the existing members did not approve, militarily directed against Russia, with no prearranged sanctions for restraining aggressive tendencies of members against each other or against outsiders, and the whole thing nicely owned and controlled by the

very biggest men in the biggest of all possible big business worlds.

I beg sincere Federal Unionists to beware, and to demand of their colleagues some guarantee in advance that this is not the destination to which humanity will be led if we create a sentimental and uninstructed desire for Federal Union.

As a matter of fact it all comes back to the large scale idea which was presented in chapter three, and I would beg you not to reject any of the conclusions to which this idea might lead unless you have been able to answer it on its own plane. The fundamental philosophy of "private enterprise" is diametrically opposed to the fundamental philosophy of any workable system based on any form of religious or lay morality. There is no hope now of our building up some paper international superstructure which will give to humanity tranquillity and peace if the whole edifice is founded on a base too contradictory ever to remain stable. So long as you continue to say that it is right and proper for a man to direct the whole of his economic life to the promotion of his own self-interest, the tremendous powers of national and international big business, aiming as they legitimately may under your system at their own self-interest, will neglect and abuse and distort and destroy any organisation, no matter how perfect that organisation might be, even if it were established in a world in which men were only moved by common sense and genuinely disinterested desire to promote the common well-being.

Let us then consider what might be the international organisation of the world without necessarily insisting that every single nation shall have adopted common owner-

ship, but at least on the assumption that common ownership had become as much the general atmosphere of the world (or of the greater part of it) as private ownership is to-day.

Under common ownership no nation, however small, and however thickly populated, could ever be starved by foreign trade. Foreign trade, as a matter of fact, was the only subject on which the classical economists really talked good common sense. They talked common sense because on this one subject they always treated each nation as a homogeneous whole,—in other words they treated it as if the people of each nation owned all things in common. They never said, “If the owners of the Lancashire cotton mills can produce shirts by paying to their workers so and so and if the owners of the American steel works can produce steel by paying to their workers so and so, then such and such results will follow”. On the contrary they always said, “If ‘Britain’ produces shirts for so much, and if ‘America’ produces steel for so much then . . . ” Foreign trade under our existing system has not followed the developments which the classical economists advised as being manifestly the most profitable for one and all simply because they neglected the fact that **many** developments unprofitable to the general interest might be highly advantageous to the owners of substantial vested interests.

Let us follow then the classical argument in order to show that even in the unlikely event of our being “beaten” in the production of every type and kind of useful commodity, we could still keep our resources fully employed and still benefit by foreign trade. To make the problem seem a little less unreal we might consider what our position

might be as against America if ten years of war had shattered our whole productive forces. In such a situation we might find that the Americans could "beat" us in the production of everything. What do we really mean by "beat" us in the production of everything? We mean that in respect of every conceivable commodity, the Americans can produce a given quantity of it by the expenditure of fewer man-hours of labours than we can. Then can they starve us out? It is so unlikely as to be utterly inconceivable that the advantage which the Americans had over us would be precisely the same (in proportion) in every commodity under the sun. Of course, if this were so, well then, we would produce our commodities with our inefficient machinery and our unproductive fields, and they would produce theirs in their efficient factories and their productive fields, and there would be no trade between us. But we would live and they would live. They would live on a higher standard than we; and we would have to look round for some other nation whose "advantage" over us in the production of some things was greater than its "advantage" in the production of others.¹

The more likely case is that we would find commodities of this kind in large numbers both in America and in Britain. Let us therefore consider a not unlikely pair of commodities, namely oil and motor cars. The Americans can beat us in both. Suppose in America they produce one car for one thousand man-hours of work, and one gallon of petrol for one man-hour of work. Suppose in Britain we can produce one car for two thousand man-hours and can distil from coal one gallon of oil for four

¹ Those who do not desire to follow a calculation may pass to the last paragraph on page 129.

man-hours. Now what happens? The Americans ship, say, 1,500 gallons of oil to Britain. This oil costs them 1,500 man-hours. In Britain it is worth 6,000 man-hours. Therefore we are perfectly willing to give the Americans two cars in exchange, because two cars cost us 4,000 man-hours. When these cars are taken back to America they are worth 2,000 American man-hours, that is to say more than the value of the oil.

By this transaction, the Americans have gained, by the expenditure of 1,500 man-hours, something which without foreign trade would have cost them 2,000 man-hours. We have gained for the expenditure of 4,000 man-hours, something which would otherwise have cost us 6,000 man-hours. Of course we have to reckon in the actual costs of transport which will not be so high as to absorb the whole of the gains of the two nations. We also have to notice that our "profit" in this specimen transaction is 50% while the American profit is 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %. This would mean that in practice we should probably have to throw in a motor cycle as well to square the matter up.

Those who are satisfied by these figures that America could not actually starve us by sending us her goods direct (what a topsy turvy world we are in which can make large numbers of people actually wonder whether this could happen) may still wonder whether the Americans could not "wipe us out" of all foreign markets. She cannot, but the necessary calculation would extend to too many pages if it were not reduced into a semi-mathematical form.

Let us consider three countries: America, Britain, and Cuba, and let us assume that they produce cars, oil and sugar. In the following calculations "mhA" means one

man-hour in America, and "mhB" and "mhC" have similar meanings for Britain and Cuba. The following table shows how many "units" of oil, cars, and sugar can be produced by 100 man-hours in the three different countries.

<i>In America</i>	<i>In Britain</i>	<i>In Cuba</i>
100 mhA—30 oil	100 mhB—8 oil	100 mhC—9 oil
100 mhA—12 car	100 mhB—5 car	100 mhC—6 car
100 mhA— 6 sugar	100 mhB—2 sugar	100 mhC—4 sugar

It will be seen that America "beats" Britain and Cuba in everything, and that Britain, in turn, is universally "beaten" even by Cuba. Now can the Americans wipe us out of the Cuban markets or wipe the Cubans out of ours. A little examination will show that the "best" commodities of the three countries are, respectively ; America, oil ; Britain, cars ; Cuba, sugar.

Now consider the trade of Cuba.

Cuba sends 4 units of sugar to America. (It is, of course, quite immaterial for the argument what the "unit" may be. It may be a thousand tons, or one ton. All that matters is that it remains constant throughout the argument.)

In America, 4 sugar is worth $66\frac{2}{3}$ mhA which, in its turn, is worth 20 oil. Therefore, the Cubans can purchase (subject of course to transport charges both ways) 20 oil for 4 sugar in America.

If, on the other hand, Cuba sends 4 sugar to Britain, in Britain 4 sugar is worth 200 mhB which, in its turn, is worth 16 oil. Therefore, the Cubans can purchase 16 oil for 4 sugar in Britain.

It is, therefore, much more profitable for the Cubans to take their oil from America, and as far as oil is concerned

the Americans can completely wipe us out of the Cuban market.

What happens to the trade in cars ?

Consider again 4 sugar sent by Cuba to America. This is again worth $66\frac{2}{3}$ mhA, which is worth 8 car. Therefore, from America, Cuba can purchase 8 car for the 4 sugar.

In Britain the 4 sugar is again worth 200 mhB, which is worth 10 car, and Cuba can therefore purchase 10 car for the 4 sugar.

It is therefore much more profitable for Cuba to take cars from Britain, and as far as cars are concerned, America cannot wipe Britain out of the Cuban market.

A similar calculation will show that America can wipe Cuban oil but not Cuban sugar out of the British market.

Of course under private ownership things may be very different. It does not pay the *people* of Cuba to purchase American rather than British cars, or to shut out American oil or British cars altogether. It may pay the individual American motor manufacturers to force American cars on the Cubans, and it may pay Cuban oil producers or motor manufacturers to exclude British cars or American oil. In this way, under our present system, foreign trade is distorted, and the calculations of the classical economists,—accurate on the assumption of common ownership,—are falsified.

The theoretical example which I have worked out is somewhat complicated. In real life, substituting detailed costs of production covering factories and fields and mines of varying efficiency even within the different countries, the problem would be much more complicated. But it would not be insoluble. Indeed one of the things which nations under common ownership would most urgently

require would be an international organisation to work out the manufacturing costs of different commodities in terms of man-hours in the different countries so as to be able to inform the individual governments which of their numerous different products it was most worth their while to concentrate upon, which it was most worth while to export, to which countries was it most worth while to export them, from which countries it was most worth while to import, and what products were most worth importing. It has to be appreciated that in complex countries like Britain and America it would never be a question of the organisation saying (to Britain), "Stop all your oil. Produce only cars. Export them and buy all your oil in America." Rather we would be advised,— "Our calculations show that you will gain most by pressing forward with cars as hard as you can and slowing up a little on your shale oil."

The organisation performing this advisory function would quite automatically and quite smoothly become the first part of the economic government of the world. There should be no friction, no clash of interest. All countries alike would stand to gain by having the best and the most impartial advice, and all would be directly interested in making the service as well-informed and as accurate as possible. Compare this state of affairs with what a similar organisation would have to encounter under private ownership. Just consider the pressure which the British shale oil owners would bring to bear on the organisation to prevent the publication of the advice, "Go slow on the production of shale oil." Just consider the extent to which they would struggle to falsify their real accounts in order to prevent this conclusion being reached. It has

to be admitted that there is a very limited extent to which certain groups of people would be interested in the full facts of the situation remaining unknown. If we were advised to slow up on oil and concentrate on cars, some of the workers producing oil might have to be transferred to cars.¹ But this would not mean the same sacrifice to them as a similar change to-day would mean to the shareholders in shale oil. These shareholders would stand to lose all their money,—to lose everything,—and for this reason they would fight to the death. Our shale workers would lose nothing financially. During their period of training they would be paid as before, and they would know that their transference was a part of a process to increase the total national wealth in which they, with all others, would share.²

If general world prosperity demanded very sudden adjustments of industry in some particular countries, then no doubt another international organisation would be planning loans to the countries concerned for the purpose of facilitating the change. Each country would on its own account plan its own capital development programme, but in addition this same international organisation would advise as to any capital developments which would be to the general advantage of the world but which might seem

¹ It has to be noticed of course that the advice would not exclusively concern cars and oil. Advice would be continuously presented covering a whole range of commodities and the workers in industries to be "discouraged" would not be limited to the choice of a single industry to be "encouraged" but would be presented with a wide range of choice.

² Moreover in most cases the advice would not be of such a drastic character as to demand our taking workers out of one industry and training them for another. The case could more usually be met by offering to the new entrants into industry slightly better prospects in the industries to be encouraged than in the industries to be discouraged.

beyond the resources of the particular country in whose territory they were required. This organisation would complete the main outline of the economic government of the world.

Is it necessary in so short a book to show how the social government of the world would be completed by ancillary international organisations dealing with health, transport, travel, scientific research, education and any number of other subjects that might be suggested ?

In this kind of world, what would happen to those territories which are now dependent colonies "belonging" to other powers? The universal rule for all countries would be that the people within them should enjoy that standard of living which their skill and enterprise, their natural resources, and their accumulated man-made capital resources made possible for them. There would be a certain tendency for the world as a whole to suggest to the most skilful nations and the nations most richly blessed by nature that they might sacrifice some part of the high standard of living which would otherwise be theirs for the benefit of the more backward and more barren parts of the world. These places would also be favoured by special technical advice from the more skilful peoples, and international research might concentrate on the problems of overcoming their natural difficulties.

Along these lines we could truly claim to love our neighbours as ourselves.

In all the above respects to-day's colonial territories and the great nation of India would be treated exactly like any other country. No financial interests in the "owning" countries would be allowed to prevent the whole resources of the colonies from being developed for the exclusive

benefit of the native peoples who live there. In the initial stages this process might involve our own people in some reduction of their standard of living, for not only might we have to compensate the shareholders in the present colonial trading companies on the lines suggested in the previous chapter, but also the working people of this country might find that they would have to pay a little bit more for the cheap bananas, cocoa, and rubber which now come to us at such a terrible cost in suffering to the coloured peoples.

It would be for the local inhabitants, through their own democratic governments, to decide on what lines their domestic resources could best be developed¹ for their common good. If it is the fact,—as it probably is,—that some of these peoples are not at this very moment fully capable of the whole task of their economic and social government they could be given technical and administrative assistance. But to avoid any question of “interested” motives this service would have to be given internationally and not exclusively by the present “owning” country. In addition, in order to present the “forward” countries with a real motive for ending their “interference” at the earliest moment, and also by way of a contribution of the most advanced towards the least advanced, it might be as well to insist that the whole cost of this service should be met by the countries which gave it.

Now lastly, how are we to deal with the question of force? It is contended by many, as a matter of sheer theoretical calculation, that while the means of production are privately owned,—even if they were privately

¹ The word “developed” of course includes development through external trade.

owned by saints,—there must be an economic drive towards war. I do not wish to enter into this argument. I have expressed my view that contemporary big business in the hands of contemporary big business men inspired by contemporary moral standards must always distort and destroy any international system designed to keep the peace.

It can further be argued that under common ownership, and under an international organisation such as I have suggested, there could not be any possibility of war's becoming a contingency against which any safeguard need be provided. I am inclined, myself, to think that this view is correct. But it may not be correct. In particular in the earliest years the remnants of the psychology of private ownership might lead to dangers, and of course we are not assuming that the whole of the world will adopt common ownership at one and the same moment.

It would therefore seem worth while to make an answer to the question, "How can armed aggression be avoided?"

At the end of the last war we asked ourselves this same question. In order to answer it the better we asked ourselves a further question. We asked, "What is it that causes wars to be fought?" We answered, "It is nations fighting for their own private ends that cause wars to be fought. As long as nations fight for their own ends, and as long as nations only concern themselves with an aggressor when their own interests or those of the exclusive allies are attacked, there will be danger of war. Therefore, to banish risk of war, let the nations pledge themselves not to use war as an instrument of national policy. In addition, in case any one should be lead into temptation, let all the others pledge themselves to make common cause

with any-nation which happens to be attacked against any nation which might be tempted to attack it. This pledge ought to be sufficient to deter any would-be aggressor and to assure any intended victim. And in this way there will be no more danger of war." We have seen that this system, in spite of its high promise, failed of its purpose, and there is now no chance of its being tried again.

Let us then address to ourselves the original question in a slightly different form. Let us ask, "Who is it that fights wars?" Let us give a courageous answer. It is individual armies and navies and air forces "owned" by individual countries which fight wars. As long as there are individual armies and navies and air forces "owned" by individual countries there will be danger of war. Therefore, to banish all risk of war for ever, let there be no more armies and navies and air forces "owned" by individual countries. In this way, and in this way only, shall we be saved from the fear of war.

Here surely is an idea sufficiently majestic to stand on its own feet against all the maelstrom of world forces now unleashed. Ten thousand little know-alls will rush in to say it is not practical. To them I reply that it is ten thousand times more practical than to go on as we are going now, and a thousand times more practical than to make another attempt to guide mankind along that most hopeful but most treacherous path which we called collective security.

An international armed force would not consist of staff conversations between the leading generals. The common soldiers would have to be mixed together in each unit. I do not believe that soldiers who had shared barracks with each other would ever consent to fight each other. This

experiment has already been tried on a small scale, for the establishment of a common army in Switzerland was perhaps the decisive factor in bringing to an end the difficulties between the German French and Italian sections of that country.

The possibility need not be ruled out that each platoon might prefer to consist exclusively of soldiers of one country only. This was done in the International Brigade but it does not form an inevitable precedent for the Brigade was contending against a very severe time factor and the soldiers did not have time to learn a common language. But in any case each battalion would have to include common soldiers from several different countries.

The members of the force would have to be deliberately educated from the first moment they decided, as young men no doubt, to try to win a place in the force. They would have to be educated in whatever was chosen as the common language. They would have to be educated in internationalism, and they would have to be educated, as suggested in the previous chapter, in liberty.

There are of course some dangers associated with this force. But most of these dangers only arise in the minds of those who do not appreciate the psychological difference between membership of this force and membership of a private army. Or, of course, in the minds of those who pretend they desire the common good of humanity but for sentimental reasons cannot abandon the idea,—ingrained into their minds by centuries of national selfishness,—that it is essential for Great Britain to have something of her very own with which to be able, in the last resort, to tell the dirty dagoes to go to hell. That this sentiment also accounts for the desire of the "dirty dagoes"

to have something of their own with which to return the compliment is not so obvious to these people.

For example the most common objection is that some general might choose to lead his force to dominate the world. It is a curious thing that until the educational experiment in internationalism had succeeded this general could not turn the international force to his own use because to all except one element of his force he would be regarded as a "foreigner"; as soon as the education in internationalism had gone far enough to prevent his being a foreigner, we should be extremely unfortunate if the education in liberty had not already gone far enough to prevent his winning the general support of his troops for a policy of tyranny.

Another curious feature is that as more and more countries joined in, the force would get smaller and smaller and not the reverse. The total force maintained by participating nations would have to be just so large as to give ample security against any which remained outside. As soon as another joined in (thereby reducing the forces of the outsiders), the force of the participants could be reduced until it ultimately reached a size which could justify the world in calling it a police force.

And here again the general who is going to lead his troops in this alleged assault on world liberty is going to find himself on the horns of a dilemma. At first, while a number of nations remain outside, the force will never attack the liberties of the nations from which it is drawn for fear of delivering itself into the hands of outsiders. But as more and more nations successively join in, the force will be so reduced in numbers that the commander could not carry out his designs against the civil population.

We have to alter so many accepted ideas at once, when we start dealing with a really big new idea. There is a real danger that we may try to handle the new idea and consider how it would work in a world all the rest of which we assume to remain unchanged. We must remember that an army has to be financed, and its material has to be made. If a private army pursues an unpopular national policy, the working people at home are in a quandary. They must choose between working for their own unpopular army or witnessing the defeat of their country by a yet more dreaded foreigner. But if a general of an international armed force pursues an unpopular policy, nothing prevents the civilian governments of the world from organising a sit-down strike in the munition works, for there would be no foreign enemy raging and snarling on the frontier. It is true the soldiers could occupy the works, but they could not work the machines, nor could they produce their food or clothing. Nor would it ever be necessary or advisable for the civil governments to hand over to the military commanders more than a very modest supply of ammunition at a time.

I therefore ask for the international armed force the question, "Why not?" I ask, for the colonial policy I have described, "Why not?" I ask, for the straightforward and universally beneficent system of world trade and world economic government which I have described, "Why not?"

What prevents us? Is it true that nothing prevents us except the private interests of a mere handful of individuals? No, it is not. What prevents us is our own lethargy, our own timidity, our own selfishness, and our own lack of vision.

What about it?

CHAPTER IX

HOW SHALL WE NOW BE SAVED?

MANY readers of these last two chapters will have been saying: "This is a magnificent programme for a new Britain and a new World some time in the distant future. No doubt the world will one day be run in this way. But how do these ideas help us now?"

Must we first of all create common ownership at home, then free the colonies and India, then set up an international armed force, before we can hope to end this war? If so the task is clearly beyond us.

We need attempt nothing so impossible, although the task before us is certainly formidable enough. It will be sufficient if we can show by certain very definite, but much more limited actions, that we have sincerely turned our steps towards the great goals I have described and do not intend to turn back.

To this end we require as an essential preliminary a complete change of government. A reshuffle, or an enlargement, will in no way meet the situation. We need a clean sweep.

Some people may well ask why, after all, the present government should not carry on? To which a preliminary, but not the final or conclusive answer is, "Why should they?"

They have had their chance. In 1931 when our present rulers took over, Britain, together with the nations which would readily have supported any real leadership on our part, held complete moral authority over the whole

earth. That moral authority was backed by complete economic authority, which in turn was backed, if need be, by unchallengeable military authority. In 1931 there was not one single nation that could have said "Yes" if we had resolutely said "No" with the possible exception of the United States of America. The world was ours to do with it anything which our leaders had chosen. They had complete authority, to promote good, to resist evil, to build up any kind of civilisation they might have designed. And what have they done with this power?

In making this charge against them, I am not thinking wholly or even mainly of the individual cabinet ministers. I am not thinking, of course, of the millions of simple people who, when given the chance of voting Conservative or Labour, have voted Conservative. I am thinking of that hard core of usually substantial men who have been responsible for the really active support of the policy which has been pursued. If any ten influential men from the city of London had been capable of understanding the large-scale argument contained in the first chapter of this book, and had presented it to our Prime Minister or either of his two immediate predecessors, and had informed him that either policy must be directed along the lines indicated at once, or they would forthwith throw the whole of their resources into an active political campaign on behalf of his political opponents, the whole course of history would have been different, and we should not now be at war. If any five had been prepared to say these things,—if any two had been prepared to say these things,—if any *one* had been prepared to say these things,—we could have been saved. But there was not one. Why should these people continue to rule over us?

But, it may be asked, would it not be all right if these people changed their hearts? It is worth noticing in passing that some people will change almost anything if they can thereby retain the control of the nation's destiny. Is it then impossible for someone like me to imagine any possibility of sincerity in those with whom I disagree? By no means. I have merely mentioned the above points so that they shall be considered. I do not in any way rely on them. What I rely on is this. Either there will be a sincere change of heart in these people or not. If there is, we shall not need to drive them out because they will resign of their own accord. What could it possibly matter to a man who had sincerely adopted the ideas of this book whether he or some other should be charged with the duty of carrying them out? It could not matter at all. Therefore if there were anything whatever to be gained by his resigning, he would resign. And there would be a good deal to be gained.

If we are to succeed it will only be through our convincing a great many people throughout the world that we have sincerely and irretrievably changed our hearts, our ideas, and our aims. How could other peoples who did not know us intimately or, for that matter, how could any of us who have watched the development of the last eight years from close at hand, be convinced that there had been a final change, if we attempted to advance in a new direction under the guidance of the very men who had been responsible for the old?

Therefore, look at it which way you will, there must be a complete change of government.

This, of course, presents to us an immense task.

It is not a question merely of replacing one individual

by another. We have to make a clean break with a whole way of life, and adopt new ways. It is unfortunately certain that the overwhelming majority of those who draw the richest rewards from this present way of life will struggle against this change by any and every means in their power. They will not do this consciously from selfish motives, as I have said several times before. If these were their motives, we should have a better chance of deflecting them. They will struggle because they honestly cannot see any difference between the ending of our present way of life and the complete annihilation of everything they know as civilisation.

There is then a whole phalanx of solid power arrayed against us. Is the task too great? Does it call for risks and sacrifices beyond our endurance? It does not call for greater risks than the present alternative which is to wade on into this war on our present levels until the whole of Europe is reduced to a shambles. Some of our richest men if those days come will look back at these and wish they had made common cause with us and accepted the quite generous rates of compensation I have suggested in chapter seven. These rates are likely to go down with every month of the present war.

Is this task greater than the tasks which other nations have performed? A task directed towards evil results is not for that reason alone a smaller task. How does our task now, compare with that which confronted Herr Hitler in the early 1920's when he set out to rearm Germany and make her master of Europe? Can we not find, for good, the same courage in the face of difficulties which he found for evil? If not, what are our chances of defeating him?

When he was asked, "*How* are you going to rearm Germany?" he replied, "I am not now so much concerned with the problem of how I am going to do it. My problem at the moment is how can I create the will which shall demand that it be done." That is our immediate problem too. We cannot attempt to foresee by what stages we shall secure a government inspired by the new ideas. Our problem now is to create the will to demand that it shall be done.

Who is prepared to play a part in the creation of that demand, clearly realising that he is not joining in some jolly political outing, but is taking up a task requiring of him the very firmest courage and resolution?

No one need despair merely because he can see no chance of our creating the new will in the present national atmosphere. We shall certainly not succeed in the present atmosphere. In this atmosphere we can but lay the foundations. But this atmosphere will not last for long after the war begins in earnest. When that happens there will be a new atmosphere when immense changes for good or evil might occur. Let us make the changes for good.

It is said that no one changes horses in mid stream. This may be good advice as long as the horse he is on seems to have a chance of carrying him over. But when the horse has lost touch with the bottom, when the waters break over him, when he can see nothing but an unending vista of ever more terrible rapids leading to waterfalls and cataracts yet unseen, he will be a fool if he does not seize, while he can, the extended branch of a strong growing tree on which he may climb to safety and to heights, previously unknown.

If our people can adopt the new morality, and authenticate their change of heart in the eyes of the world by a change of government, they can save themselves from their present dangers. It will only be necessary yet further to guarantee our good faith to the world by a few quite simple, but unequivocal, preliminary steps in the right direction.

What, then, should the new government do? 3

It should appoint, as Secretary of State and as Viceroy for India two men who are known to be determined that British economic and political control in India shall end at the earliest possible moment. Community problems in India no doubt present difficulties which are very useful to those who do not desire to abandon our control. But in the hands of men determined that they should be solved and backed by a government equally determined, they would be overcome. The fact must be faced that the new Viceroy would have to encounter the fierce opposition of all those Indians who enjoy the highest rewards of the present order, just as we should at home. This opposition would have to be overcome.

Then we should summon a conference of the real representatives of the working men throughout the Colonial Empire, including some of those we have put in prison for demanding trade union rights. With them we would discuss how the resources of the Empire could best be developed for their exclusive advantage and we would give them a guarantee that we would deal with the interests of the shareholders in the companies now making money in the Empire on the lines suggested for all other compensation. As it has been suggested that the natives would for some years require assistance from white administrators

or technicians, the government would also invite representatives of other countries, including Germany, to attend the conference to consider how best this service could be rendered.

Then we should invite all nations to send to Canada (or to some other Dominion, or, if all Dominions refused consent, to one of our Colonial possessions, but not to this country) a contingent consisting of privates, N.C.O.s, lieutenants, and perhaps a captain, but no generals, to share a camp in common. It would there be their task to compare methods of drill and equipment, to consider the most suitable words of command, and the language most likely to enable them to work in co-operation. It is nice to think that when once freed from the sneering advice of the so-called "practical" men, these genuinely practical men would almost inevitably adopt the "idealists'" solution and talk to each other in Esperanto. At first there might not be an overwhelming response to this invitation. Most of the neutral European nations would be afraid of offending Germany. American response would depend on how the matter seemed likely to affect the forthcoming Presidential elections. But the Chinese would send a contingent, and one could certainly collect contingents from the exiled soldiers of republican Spain, of Czechoslovakia, and of Poland. These would be sufficient to make a start.

At home, one would have to take the first steps towards common ownership. The precise programme would depend a little on circumstances. By way of example, one might take over the shares in the Banks, the Insurance Companies, the Railways, the Mines, the Steel Industry, and a few other major industries, and pay compensation for them

on the lines suggested in chapter seven. The government would also take power to acquire or to use any property needed for war purposes in the widest possible sense of that term and to make payments which took into account the total sources of income of the owners. This would present one of the most difficult stages in the work of the new administration. Many owners would be so opposed to the whole temper of the new policy that they would feel obliged to try to sabotage the whole enterprise. In war time, however, the technicians as a whole would support the government; and it ought to be possible to keep the recalcitrance of the owners within bounds by indicating to them that when full common ownership came to be introduced at the end of the war the assessors of compensation would be entitled to consider the extent which each owner had supported or opposed the national endeavour.

These major measures ought to be sufficient to guarantee to the world the sincerity of our change of heart, and it remains to be considered what effect this might have on the principal foreign countries.

What is likely to happen in France? If the people of this country were to turn their wills in the direction of the solution suggested in this book, it is reasonably certain that the people of France would be turning their thoughts in a not dissimilar direction at about the same time. There are three possibilities. Success might be achieved in the two countries simultaneously, in which case no difficulties would arise. Alternatively the fascist measures adopted by France might retard the development of the new morality in that country, in which case no doubt M. Daladier and M. Bonnet would not in any way welcome

the kind of policy which we would adopt; and, let us face the fact, for one awful moment they would even toy with the idea of making terms with Hitler in order to smash the people's Britain and prevent the coming of the people's Europe. I should not myself fear this moment. We could broadcast to the French people, and by that time we may hope to have a very substantial number of people on the other side of the Channel some of whom could be used to express our views to the French people in circumstances that would make it very difficult to lock them up.

The third alternative is that because of fascist oppression in France the new morality may burst forth in that country sooner than in ours. If this be so, I, for one, shall be sorry as I should have liked to see our own country taking the lead in the movement which will finally end the centuries-old war situation of Europe. But this is pure sentimentalism on my part, and if the French are ahead of us we shall have to follow their lead as quickly as possible and at least prevent any developments here that might impede them.

What would be the effect of our change on Russia and Germany? Our aim would be first to separate the Russian people and the Russian government from Germany, and then to separate the German people from the German government. Could this succeed?

I have suggested that there is no chance whatever of our persuading the Russian government, or the Russian people, to prefer our victory to that of Germany as long as we stand for our present set of objectives. Would it not be better then to appeal to them in language which they might understand and to which they might respond?

Some people say they do not want to appeal to the Russian people at all. Then what do they want to do to them? Shoot them? The whole hundred and ninety million of them? Surely this would be rather a formidable undertaking, quite apart from its inhumanity. Surely we want to co-operate with these Russian millions in the building of a new civilisation if we can?

That Russians are now killing Finns is, in itself, as damnable as that Germans are killing Poles. We cannot restore life to the dead. But surely we want to create conditions in which Russians will not permanently oppress Finns and Germans will not permanently oppress Poles.

Of course if you happen to draw a large income from the ownership of a comfortable block of shares in Vickers-Armstrong, then the more people hate Russia and the more Russians are shot, the better you are pleased. But if you are convinced that common ownership is right in itself and must form a part of the ultimate society under which alone man can achieve his full moral stature, then whatever you may think of other aspects of the Russian experiment, you must at least applaud the Russians for being the first to establish this essential economic system. Even if you are convinced that in many respects they have not made the best of it, you will remember that they have had to face the difficulties which are encountered by all those who first make an entirely new experiment in any department of human life. It would have been a curious thing if Stevenson had produced the Coronation Scot instead of his Rocket. At least you will recognise that our chances of securing Russian goodwill and Russian co-operation in our struggles, and our chances of persuading Russia (if such is her intention) not to launch out into Napoleonic

adventures all over Europe, will be enormously increased if the people who speak to her have been able to give an assurance by their actions that they are not waiting for an opportunity of smashing Russia, for the sake of smashing common ownership, if a favourable chance should present itself.

If it be the fact that world forces of common ownership, under Russian guidance, have now decided to spread their doctrine outwards, if they can, by force of arms, then this is very largely due, I believe, to their reaching the conclusion, since the collapse of Popular Front movements in the Western Democracies, that there is no hope whatever of our conducting ourselves in such a way as to make possible a world based on any kind of moral principles. In such a world they decide to look after their own interests.

This view of theirs may be right or wrong. I am only concerned to suggest that it may reasonably be their view. If this is so, we can surely expect a complete change in their policy if, by our actions, we can convince them that their present view is incorrect.

Indeed, if we made a complete change in our government now, and if we adopted the measures I have suggested, I believe the Russian action would be this ;—“Thank goodness common ownership is now assured. Many nations may now hold out under private ownership for years. There will be further difficulties and dangers to overcome. But with this second great example,—in this case in the centre of the most powerful Empire in the world,—we may be sure that one country after another will follow the lead, and our great experiment will never be destroyed. That being so, there can be no further

cause for us to waste our resources in military adventures. We can concentrate on our development at home. And we can even relax the restrictions on liberty which have seemed to us necessary until now."

These are the reactions which seem to me most likely in the minds of the present Russian government. Unqualified admirers of the Russian government will say that I have overestimated the cynicism and selfishness of Russia. This may be so,—in which case the Russian reactions to our progress would be even more favourable. In either case we could count on their abandoning any sort of economic or military or moral support of Germany.

Others will say that I have grossly exaggerated the disinterestedness of the Russian rulers. They will say that these men are solely concerned with personal domination over the widest possible territories. With this view I do not agree. But supposing it is correct, then what would our conduct be? I suggest that, with our new policy, we could still appeal to the Russian people over the heads of the Russian government. With our present policy what can we expect the Russian people to think of us? Whatever we say it is the propaganda of those people who are known to detest common ownership which the overwhelming majority of Russians support. But with an entirely new direction, it ought to be possible for us to broadcast to Russia. Nor would I exclude the possibility of dropping leaflets which would be extremely damaging to any Russian government which went on wasting Russian lives in military campaigns against private ownership after our conversion to common ownership had made it unnecessary.

Whatever, therefore, may be the ultimate "truth" about

the rulers of Russia, I should not expect them to be anxious, —or if anxious I should not expect them for long to be able,—to support Germany against the British people pursuing the policy of the new morality. Finally, I would not be deterred by the total failure of any or all of these hopes with regard to Russia. To win Russian co-operation would make things much easier. But even without it, I should expect the course I shall recommend to succeed against the German government.

And so we come to the problem of Germany, the last and the first of our difficulties and dangers.

I must confess that I cannot myself understand the significance of the campaign which is adequately summed up in the words "Stop the War Now." I hope I have made it clear that I loathe this war and passionately desire its end. But these four words, when spoken to an average audience, convey the meaning, and in fact they mean, "Go and find out on what terms Hitler would agree to stop now." Is that a correct description of what the people who use those words would actually desire this nation to do? Herr Hitler would not agree to stop on any terms which did not leave him master of most of central Europe and free to jockey around with his friends in Italy and Spain in order to create a favourable opportunity for menacing the West all over again. (Whether he wanted to take this course or not, his internal economy would compel him to take it.) It is said by some that in such a peace the German workers would overthrow Herr Hitler and we ourselves should achieve a change of government. I cannot see it. Surely Herr Hitler would dress himself up as the greatest hero in German history and the illegal opposition would be even more dispirited, if

possible, than it was by the Munich agreement. And surely our own people too would be more likely to react, in the immediately following election, in the same way as they reacted to the first news of Munich. I cannot really think that the Russians would hurl themselves at Herr Hitler's still unbeaten military machine in order to save us from the consequences of such a peace, nor do I believe it possible to persuade the British people to enjoy the situation that would result if they did.

If this line of thought is correct, surely "Stop the War Now" is a most misguided cry. After all we are in a war against Herr Hitler and his government. When Mr. Chamberlain says he is fighting Hitlerism he does not mean what we mean. He wants to destroy the thing which insulted him by making its peace with the Bolsheviks on the basis of which it was obviously likely to become strong enough to attack the British Empire. He wants to destroy the thing which cannot stick to the ordinary rules of supply and demand in international trade. We want to destroy the thing which accepts finance from big business to smash the organisations and the living conditions of the working man. We want to smash the thing which utterly despises working men and desires to "educate" them into stupidity so that they may spill their blood winning soil for the honour and glory of the German Fuehrer.

But still, we do want to smash it. And if there is therefore a line of conduct, consistent with everything we desire, which will end the war on terms which will involve the disappearance of this hideous human evil, surely it is a mistake to use language which seems to imply that we want the war to end on terms which would still leave this evil in power.

Whatever may be the case in Russia, there is no doubt at all that our voice can be heard in Germany. I have already mentioned the fact that neutral observers report that a very high proportion of the German people hear our broadcasts or hear from someone who has heard them in spite of threatened penalties. Our leaflets must be picked up. The illegal organisations still take in outside news and views. We do not yet seem to have attempted loud speakers in the front line trenches.

It is not that we are not heard. We have nothing to say.

The best of our public men to-day are offering to the German people a return to 1927. It is child's play for Goebbels to convince the German people that what we mean is 1919. Apart from all else there is one overriding reason why we cannot hope to succeed in this war under our present direction. If we succeeded with our present ideas intact, our victory would mean just one more attempt to run the whole of the centre and west of Europe under the control of monopoly-capitalism. Whatever else may happen or may not happen, we can rest assured that history does not repeat itself, and this thing is not going to happen. As long as we try to make it happen, we are doomed.

Even if we could convince the Germans that what we offer them is a more generous version of 1927 (and this is quite beyond our present powers) they will fight to the death for Herr Hitler rather than surrender themselves to our tender mercies again on these terms.

How would the matter stand under the new direction here suggested?

I would ask the reader to pause for one moment to

consider the passionate thrill of new hope that would encircle the whole earth in the wake of our new message.

“The people of Britain speaking to you.

“The World for Humanity! This is our message to you.

“People of Germany,—what are we fighting for? How can we possibly gain by killing each other? There is more than enough in this world for all of us if peoples will only treat each other as brothers. In heaven’s name why can’t we co-operate for prosperity?

“That our government seized colonial possessions by force in the last century, we admit. That our government took your colonies and wrongly accused you of the sole guilt for the last war, we admit. That our government forced you to disarm, pretending that we would disarm ourselves, and that we did not do so, we admit. That our government allowed your leaders and the leaders of other countries to make attacks on your weaker neighbours which even you yourselves must have known in your hearts were wrong, and that we then turned round and fought you when, and only when, your attack on Poland showed our government that we ourselves were in danger,—all this we admit.

“But that kind of Government we have now replaced.

“We are now governed by all the people who have steadily opposed the whole of that shameful policy.

“For what purpose do you now fight us?

“We offer you liberty from every tyranny. You German working people, we offer you liberty from the owners who make money out of you. We offer you liberty from the people who falsely pretended to you that your hardships came to you only from the Jews in order to disguise

the fact that they themselves were reaping rich rewards from your privations. They told you the Jews made you poor. How much higher have your wages been since the Jews were driven out? You know in your hearts that the treatment you have been persuaded to mete out to these fellow human beings of yours is unworthy of the best traditions of your people. We offer you the chance to salve your own consciences from what you know weighs upon them.

“In our country we working people are marching towards ownership of all things in common. In the future we see no unemployment. We will all go to work on all our resources, and share out the product equitably amongst all of us. No one will draw a rich income either from being an owner or from being an influential party boss. Why will you not share in these advantages?

“We offer you liberty too from the tyrants who would prevent your speaking as you choose, from the tyrants who would prevent your thinking as you choose, from the tyrants who would prevent your meeting and writing as you choose.

“And now these colonies of yours, of which we have spoken. Perhaps you will think that we will naturally give them back to you. But a little reflection will show you that this is not the wisest or the fairest course. These colonies are not ours either to own ourselves, or to give to others. All colonies, ours and yours, belong, by natural right, to the human beings who live there. It is to these people that we will give the colonies,—both our own and those we took from you. We ask you, and we have already asked your government, will you co-operate with us in giving to the peoples of all colonies,—ours and

yours,—the service and advice of which these people stand in need until such time as they can stand alone?

“And as to arms. Perhaps you think we are asking you to disarm first so that we may disarm afterwards. Perhaps you think that all this is a trap and that these fair words are a device to persuade you to stop fighting in order that afterwards we may again enslave you and starve you as our government starved you last time when you stopped fighting.

“We have no such designs. In our view there will never be peace,—peace for the workers of the world,—until no governments possess private armies of their own. While separate rulers have their own separate armies how can the workers be sure that these armies will not be enlarged to include the whole nation, and then whole nations be set against each other in a renewed futility of mutual suicide?

“All arms in the exclusive possession of separate nations we desire to destroy. We ask you to send your people to us to watch us destroy our own arms. We ask you that our people shall come over to watch you destroy yours.

“You will probably think, as we do, that some arms must be retained. These arms we propose to you should be in the hands of an army of all peoples. In every battalion we think there ought to be Germans, British, and French, as well as any other peoples that would join with us. (This in particular has to be imagined as spoken across no man’s land by loud speakers.) You German soldiers, we believe that we and you, sharing barracks with each other, knowing each other as men and not as enemies, can keep the peace of the world and prevent our governments from sending us out to kill each other. Together

we believe we can make sure that mankind can work in the factories and fields and enjoy their produce for ever free from the endless fear of war. Is this not a fairer prospect than to make of the earth a desolation as your government now compels you to do?

"If we beat you, what shall we gain?—You will fight us again and your youngest children, those on whom all your hopes are fixed, will die as we and you are dying now. If you beat us, what will you gain?—We shall fight you in the future, and our youngest children, on whom we fix our hopes, will die in killing yours.

"Our governments are willing that we should make common cause with you to keep peace. Does your government still forbid you to make common cause with us?

"Make test of us now this moment. Send out one man to us now. We will not shoot at him. Let him but put his head over the parapet, at the same moment two of our men will put their heads over ours. Level your rifles at them to hold them as hostages. Then let your man advance his body. We will advance ours. Train your machine guns on our men. Then let your man advance one step forward. Our two men will do the same. Let your man come fully armed. Because we trust you, our men will come to you unarmed. As your man advances, so will ours. When you have sent one man over to us, and when we have sent two men to you, then send us two men armed. We will send four unarmed men in exchange. Then send us four, we will send you eight. When fifty men have changed sides, then let us all come out of these hellish trenches and meet each other on God's open ground which we have defiled. Make trial of us now and end this slaughter for ever."

Now surely it is seen how everything falls into place and forms part of what must be done if we are to end this war without years of slaughter and build a world safe from war and fit for men to live in.

We cannot break the power of the German government over its people by smooth words which are answered as soon as they are spoken, not by the lies and cunning of Dr. Goebbels, but by our own deeds.

We cannot persuade the people of Germany that we are fighting to free Europe unless we set out at once to free India. They will believe we are fighting to preserve our Colonial possessions and theirs unless we set out at once to transfer these possessions to the only people who have any right to them. They will believe we are fighting to hold them in military subjection unless we set out at once to create a system in which no one can hold anyone in military subjection. They will believe we are fighting to impoverish the workers of all Europe for the benefit of our financiers and industrialists unless we set out at once to create a system in which no industrialists or financiers can impoverish any workers.

On the other hand, as soon as we have set ourselves unequivocally towards all these tasks, Dr. Goebbels and the whole of his propaganda machine is at our mercy. There is not a single word that he can say which is not at once revealed as treachery;—treachery not only to humanity but to the German people. And this is done not by our words, but by our deeds.

Do not doubt the power of words, ideas and thought when they are backed by action. It might well be that some small people such as the Nicaraguans could not save themselves by their morality if some great power

had decided that it must intervene to "restore law and order." Fortunately for ourselves we are not a small people. We have a tremendous reputation for moral leadership. No people anywhere can afford not to listen to our voice. Governments of tyrants and the money makers of the world will hate and fear our message. Let them hate us. Let them fear us. They will not hold their peoples for six months against the might of our moral authority. And from the first moments they will know it.

What stands in our way?

Nothing at all except our own timidity, our own lack of vision, and our own lethargy,—and unfortunately the stolid power of a mere handful of people who cannot understand the possibility of civilisation apart from the system which now hands them such rich rewards.

Then what part will you play?

Will you take your part in the struggle to create the will for this early peace and this new world? Will you this week persuade ten more people to understand the position in which we find ourselves? Will you make them persuade ten more each to understand these things?

Or will you take what is for the moment by far the easier course and do nothing about it whatever. Will you take that course which seems so easy now, which demands no mental effort now, but which will take you ultimately to destruction, and your friends and your children to destruction, with no guarantee in this world that anything worth while will be gained from it?

If you mean to take the courageous course, then take courage. Reject the taunts of those who will tell you that you are "diverting the nation from its war effort." You will be doing nothing of the sort. You will be taking

the only course which can offer you and your people escape from war and success in peace.

And to take yet more courage, read the tremendous promise nine verses after the warning quoted on the opening page of this book.

“Yet behold therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters: . . . and they shall comfort you when you see their ways and their doings: and you shall know that I have not done without a cause all that I have done in the land, saith the Lord God.”

Let us act soon that the remnant be not too piteously small.

THE END . . .

. . . OR IS IT THE BEGINNING ?

Quite seriously though, do you *really* mean to help? If so, I should be glad to hear from you at the House of Commons or through Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.

